

# Saint Josemaría Escrivá's Written Works and Preaching

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## Introduction

José Luis Illanes, a theologian and former director of the Istituto Storico San Josemaría Escrivá, is the co-author of the critical-historical edition of *Conversaciones con Monseñor Josemaría Escrivá* published in 2012. In this article he offers an overview of the corpus of published and unpublished writings of the founder of Opus Dei including the notes taken by others of his preaching and preserved in the archives of the Opus Dei Prelature in Rome. This survey excludes only Escrivá's correspondence and the statues of Opus Dei.

Illanes takes a chronological approach in this survey. He distinguishes three major periods in Escrivá's literary production: 1) from the foundation of Opus Dei in 1928 to 1946, 2) from 1946 to the late 1950s, and 3) from the late 1950's to the author's death in 1975. Most of Escrivá's writings belong to the first and third periods. During the second period, he wrote relatively little.

A particularly interesting aspect of Illanes's study is the information he gives on the very different ways in which Escrivá approached writing his various works. Until about 1950 he wrote drafts by hand or on a typewriter and corrected them by hand. Around 1950 he began to use a dictaphone or tape recorder and revise the transcribed text. *The Way* was based primarily on notes that Escrivá had taken over many years about events in his own spiritual life and in his priestly dealings with many other people. *Conversations*, on the other hand, began with draft answers prepared by his secretaries to questions posed by journalists, which Escrivá then edited and revised. The homilies eventually published in *Christ is Passing By*, and *Friends of God*, began with the more or less detailed notes Escrivá prepared for preaching and later expanded with more quotations from Scripture, from the Fathers of the Church and from other sources.

Even more helpful is Illanes' explanation of the origin and significance of the series of 37 "letters" which Escrivá wrote to the members of Opus Dei. Twenty-five are essays on various aspects of the spirit and activities of Opus Dei, whereas 12 deal with the juridical status of Opus Dei. They average 60 to 80 pages, but range in length from 7 to 400 pages. They were given final form in the 1960s, but in many cases Escrivá assigned to them earlier dates that roughly correspond to the periods in which he formulated the materials on which the final versions were based.

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**Abstract:** *Saint Josemaría Escrivá's written works and preaching: A compilation of all the writings of Saint Josemaría, both published and unpublished, including notes that have been kept from his oral preaching. The author follows a historical, chronological outline, starting with his first unpublished writings and finishing with works published posthumously.*

**Keywords:** *Writings of Josemaría Escrivá – Preaching of Saint Josemaría*

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## SYNTHETIC HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The expression “written works,” however precise it may seem, is not necessarily so when one tries to categorize the work of a particular author. The first distinction one might make is between “written texts” and “spoken words,” understanding the latter to include discourses, speeches, lectures, meditations, talks, conferences, sermons, etc., which were not written in advance as texts to be read aloud, but spoken, perhaps on the basis of notes or outlines, or entirely extemporaneously. Such a distinction between what is spoken and what is written is clear in principle, but not so clear in practical reality. Often, classes, conferences, meditations or talks that were given orally are later transformed into written texts. Nor it is infrequent that notes taken by listeners become an amply cited reference text in themselves: it suffices to indicate a few notable examples of this, such as a large number of sermons of St. Augustine and other Fathers of the Church, the *reportata* of various medieval teachers or a significant portion of the Aristotelian *corpus*. We might also mention, as a more extreme case, collections of isolated sayings that disciples or admirers take note of and transmit later to posterity; the most well-known of these are the *Tischreden* of Luther, gathered in the eighth volume of *Luthers Werke in Auswahl*.

The distinction between “published works” and “unpublished works” can seem more definitive, although there are also cases that fall somewhere in between these two categories. Such is the case of those works which an author leaves prepared for publication, while indicating that they should be published after his death, or perhaps publishing during his lifetime only a small number of copies for a specific group of people, postponing a wider distribution until a later date. There are also cases of diaries or similar texts which may have been written only for the personal use of the author, but in which the idea of eventual publication is frequently present or quite evident. Finally, there are outlines and reflections, or more or less developed notes, written in preparation for a book an author may have planned to write, but for one reason or another did not bring to completion. (Pascal’s *Pensées* is the most obvious case, although there are many others.)

The above considerations are meant only to introduce the theme of the present article. Specifically, they are intended to suggest the breadth of outlook with which one must approach the task of giving an account of the written work of St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, since, as we will see, it includes many of the varieties described above.

Our intention in the pages that follow is to give a general introductory overview of this body of work. As can be seen from the description of the various series of volumes

planned for the collection of his complete works, it is very ample: published works, unpublished works (that is, texts that the author intended for publication that are as of yet still unpublished), collected letters, manuscripts, oral preaching.<sup>[1]</sup> As can be seen, the division of texts into these series has been made on the basis of their status with regard to publication, rather than on other criteria such as their literary genre, date of origin, intended audience, etc.

In this article we will follow a criterion that could be called historical-biographical. One must remember that St. Josemaría left behind him an ample literary legacy (*“Escrivá escribe”* [Escrivá writes], he sometimes commented, making a play on words with his last name). This legacy testifies not only to his spiritual strength, but also to his insightful manner of expression, his dominion of the language and his good style. But he was not a writer or an author in the habitual sense of the word. He did not write for the sake of writing or just to produce a literary work, but for the service of that which constituted the purpose of his whole life: his priestly condition and the fulfillment of the mission he received on October 2, 1928, that is, the promotion of Christian life in the middle of the world among men and women of the most varied conditions and cultures. His writings arose, therefore, not only “in connection with” the development of his life and mission, but in strict relation to that which this life and mission demanded of him at each stage of its development.

Analysis of archival documentation allows us to distinguish two periods of especially intense literary production in the life of St. Josemaría: the first from the beginning of Opus Dei until 1946, and the second from the end of the 1950s until his death. Between these two periods, there is a gap during which there was a reduction in the volume of his written work. We will follow this chronological division in our exposition, while keeping in mind the introductory remarks made above. There are two other complementary observations we would make before beginning our exposition:

1. Our objective is to offer an overview of the work of St. Josemaría, including some basic documental references, but without entering into the sort of detailed analysis which should be reserved for the critical editions in preparation. We will keep in mind the entirety of the work of St. Josemaría, including his oral preaching, leaving aside only two types of writings which, by their nature, demand special treatment: his letters, numbering in the thousands, and juridical documents, i.e. the statutes that have governed the life of Opus Dei over the course of its juridical itinerary.<sup>[2]</sup>
2. The deep connection between the life of the founder of Opus Dei and his literary production requires us to make some reference to the historical context of the various texts. We have therefore considered it appropriate to include a brief historical exposition at the beginning of each of the three principal parts into which our study is divided, as well as at the beginning of some of the subsections. Of course, we will limit ourselves to indicating some general lines, so as not to unnecessarily prolong the exposition, while offering succinct bibliographic references in the notes.

## **FROM THE FOUNDATION OF OPUS DEI (1928) UNTIL ST. JOSEMARÍA'S MOVE TO ROME (1946)**

The life of St. Josemaría revolved around a crucial event: the moment during the morning of October 2, 1928, in which he perceived the mission for which God had destined him: the foundation of Opus Dei.<sup>[3]</sup> From this moment on, he dedicated all his energies to this task. The beginnings were not easy: the awareness of call to holiness in the middle of the world was not then widespread, and he had to open a new path. The reality was that, as St. Josemaría himself put it, “souls escaped through my hands like eels.” Nevertheless, it did not take long for him to find some who understood him: the first was one of his former schoolmates from the institute in Logroño, Isidoro Zorzano, who was followed some time later (but still within the 1930s) by others. From the beginning he was also able to count on the collaboration of some priests. And, from February 14, 1930 on, when he understood that women should also form part of Opus Dei, his apostolate also expanded in that direction.<sup>[4]</sup>

St. Josemaría's earliest writings arose in this context of the beginning and growth of his foundational apostolic work, as instruments in the service of his priestly and apostolic activity. The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War slowed the expansion of Opus Dei, but not its interior growth. The tension of wartime was like a trial by fire that helped to solidify the determination of the first ones: Isidoro Zorzano, Juan Jiménez Vargas, Ricardo Fernández Vallespín, Álvaro del Portillo, Pedro Casciaro, Francisco Botella... These men would thus become fundamental points of support for the future apostolate. The same did not happen with the women, to whom St. Josemaría had been able to dedicate less time and who were especially affected by the lack of contact with the founder during the war. In fact, he had to begin the apostolate among women entirely anew. As for the priests, already before the civil war, in 1935, St. Josemaría had come to understand that because of the novelty implied by the spirit of Opus Dei in so many aspects of life, the priests needed for its apostolic structure would have to come from among the laymen who already formed part of the Work. Thus, in this field also, he had to make a new beginning.

As soon as peace returned in 1939 and in the following years, the apostolic work not only recommenced but experienced a rapid development, expanding from Madrid to many other Spanish cities. The work with women also participated in this growth. In 1942, the first center for women of Opus Dei was set up in Madrid. In those years some women came to the Work who together with Dolores Fisac, who had already received a call to Opus Dei in 1937, would contribute to its worldwide development: Encarnación Ortega, Nisa González Guzmán, Guadalupe Ortiz de Landázuri... Parallel to these developments, St. Josemaría was seeking a juridical formula that would allow for the incardination of those who could be the first priests of Opus Dei. He found the solution, not without divine help, on February 14, 1943: the establishment of the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross as a fundamental part of the foundational and pastoral reality of Opus Dei. Already before that date, some laymen had begun preparing for the priesthood, including the necessary theological studies, and in 1944 the first members of Opus Dei received priestly ordination

in Madrid: Álvaro del Portillo, José María Hernández Garnica, and José Luis Múzquiz. Apostolic expansion to other countries became possible when World War II ended in 1945, and at almost the same time, St. Josemaría moved to Rome, with the intention of establishing there the central seat of Opus Dei.

Although it has been sketched in the briefest outline, such is the historical background presupposed by the first writings of St. Josemaría, to which we now turn our attention.<sup>[5]</sup>

### ***“Apuntes íntimos”***

Any attempt to describe the literary work of the founder of Opus Dei must begin with the consideration of a text that the author himself did not intend for publication, but which nevertheless constitutes the point of departure for several of his later works, and even for the establishment of a method of work that he followed for a great part of his life. We refer, as anyone who knows the work of St. Josemaría will already have guessed, to the text known as *Apuntes íntimos* [*Intimate notes*].

At one point in 1930, St. Josemaría was asked to describe the event of October 2, 1928. He recounted how over the course of the previous years the Lord had been opening his horizons and granting him lights that were as if engraved with fire in his heart and in his mind. To make sure that he would remember all this, he had been careful to take some notes. In the morning of October 2, he turned to these notes once again and set about putting them in order so as to reread them and meditate on them. It was then that – in his words – he “saw” Opus Dei.<sup>[6]</sup> St. Josemaría retained throughout his life this custom of taking notes of the lights received in prayer, of spiritual and apostolic experiences, or of texts from the Gospel that were engraved deeply in his soul. He carried out this practice with particular intensity in the years after 1928 and 1930, that is, in the first moments of the foundation of Opus Dei.

These notes, together with other texts written by St. Josemaría during the first years, were gathered and typed in the 1980s by his successor at the head of Opus Dei, Msgr. Álvaro del Portillo, with the aim of presenting them for his cause of canonization.<sup>[7]</sup> He gave the title *Apuntes íntimos* to the volume printed as a result of this work, the title by which these writings of St. Josemaría have been known since then.<sup>[8]</sup>

The basic core of the *Apuntes íntimos* is made up of various handwritten “*Cuadernos*” or “*Notebooks*”.<sup>[9]</sup> One earlier Notebook was destroyed by the author. Notebooks II through VII collect notes dated from March 11, 1930 to February 19, 1935. Notebook VIII has two parts, separated by three years: the first includes notes from the period before the Spanish Civil War (Notebook VIII, pages 1-62, with notes spanning the period from February 20, 1935 to June 30, 1936), and the second from the period after the war (Notebook VIII, pages 62v-74, with notes from April 13, 1939 to November 15, 1940). The last Notebook in the series falls chronologically between these two parts of Notebook VIII: St. Josemaría began it in Pamplona on December 11, 1937 and called it, not Notebook IX, but “*Duplicate Notebook VIII*” [*Cuaderno VIII duplicado*]. The entries in Duplicate Notebook VIII go from December 11, 1937 to January 29, 1939.<sup>[10]</sup>

In gathering these texts into a single volume, Msgr. Álvaro del Portillo followed a chronological order, thus situating the content of Duplicate Notebook VIII between the first and second parts of the original Notebook VIII.<sup>[11]</sup> Just after the first part of the original Notebook VIII, he also placed a small, unnumbered notebook, which the author wrote during his stay in the Honduras Legation.<sup>[12]</sup> Finally, after the text of the Notebooks, he added fourteen Appendices, in which he transcribed other documents with notes from the spiritual life of the author, usually things written for his confessor.<sup>[13]</sup>

We pass now from a description of the *Apuntes íntimos* to the consideration of their content and of the history of their composition, particularly of the Notebooks which form its core. The texts of Notebook II, up to page 43 (*Apuntes íntimos*, n. 95) were first written on small half-sheets or quarter-sheets of paper, unbound though kept in order. Something analogous seems to have been the case with the missing Notebook I. “At a certain moment during the year 1930,” comments Prof. Rodríguez, “Escrivá decided to record his spiritual and intimate notes not on ‘half-sheets’ (loose pages) but in ‘notebooks’, which would be more secure. This was not just a decision for the future, but implied also the tedious work of transcribing into notebooks all the points already contained in the collection of loose sheets of paper. He carried out this transcription patiently.”<sup>[14]</sup>

In page 43 of Notebook II, dated October 25, 1930, the vigil of Christ the King, we have the first entry written directly into one of the Notebooks (*Apuntes íntimos*, n. 96). Analyzing this Notebook allows us to discover that there were more than 250 small sheets of paper on which the author had noted until then his spiritual experiences and his efforts as founder. In any case, from the vigil of Christ the King in 1930, St. Josemaría was already following the mode of work that would be habitual in the composition of the rest of his Notebooks: he always carried in the pocket of his cassock a small piece of paper – *mi cuartilla*, he wrote on one occasion – in which he would jot down brief notes, or more extensive points, which would later serve as a guide or reminder to write the texts in the notebook.

Regarding the content, we make one preliminary observation. The entries in the Notebooks follow a chronological order, which can make one think of a personal diary. Nevertheless, this would not be an appropriate description, as St. Josemaría himself commented on several occasions. One could call them a “diary” only in a very broad and partially misleading sense, since they presuppose a methodology and contain a thematic range that transcends the characteristics of this literary genre. St. Josemaría did not write every day in the Notebooks, and if the entries always include an indication regarding the date of their transcription, this date does not always correspond to their original writing on loose pieces of paper. Moreover, in the period of almost twelve years covered by the *Apuntes íntimos* there are periods with scarcely any entries, or none at all.

More fundamentally, the origin of this work and of each of its entries is not the desire to record the author’s life journey, but to gather with the greatest possible fidelity the inspirations and orientations that God might grant him, as well as the fruits of his consideration in the light of faith of the small and big events taking place in his soul and in

the world. And all of this has as a decisive point of reference the call of God, culminating on October 2, 1928, to spread Opus Dei. The Notebooks are thus, more than anything, a light, a stimulus, a reminder – an “alarm clock,” to use a word that St. Josemaría liked to use – for the author himself, who would reread and meditate on what was written there. At the same time and inseparably, they were a tool and a help for the formation of those who, welcoming his call, drew close to his apostolate and gave signs of being able to understand the message of Opus Dei.

Two more observations can complete this summary description of the *Apuntes íntimos*.<sup>[15]</sup> In the first place, we note that with relative frequency, as he reread and meditated on what was written in the Notebooks, St. Josemaría would add notes between the lines or at the bottom of the page with considerations to develop or complement the text. In the second place, we note that during the 1950s the Notebooks and other notes and papers from the first years were brought from Madrid, where they had remained until then, to Rome. Once in Rome, they were kept by St. Josemaría in his personal files. Over the course of the 1950s and 1960s the founder of Opus Dei returned from time to time to this material. During the summer of 1968, which he spent in a house located in Sant’ Ambrogio Olona (a town near Varese in Italy), he dedicated himself from the middle of July until the end of August to reviewing this material. During those days he attentively went over what was written there, making some marginal notes, and also indicating some points about which he thought it opportune to add some further explanation or commentary, asking Álvaro del Portillo to prepare this in case he himself would not be able to do so personally.<sup>[16]</sup>

### ***“Consideraciones espirituales” and “Camino” [The Way]***

Much has already been written about *Camino* and its predecessor, *Consideraciones espirituales*. In all the biographies of St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer there is a chapter or section dedicated to these books, and there are also numerous studies specifically on this topic. Notwithstanding the value of these studies and biographies, from the perspective of giving the history of the text as well as an analysis of its structure and theological content, they are all completely outdone by the monumental critical-historical edition prepared by Prof. Pedro Rodríguez, to which we have already made reference. With this edition in mind, it can even seem that an article attempting to present the written work of St. Josemaría need do more than refer the reader to this critical edition, without dedicating a special section either to *Consideraciones espirituales* or to *Camino*. Nevertheless, in the interest of offering a complete overview of the work of St. Josemaría, we will include some paragraphs summing up what is explained much more fully in the introduction to the historical-critical edition.<sup>[17]</sup>

The first fact that should be mentioned is the continuity between *Consideraciones espirituales* and the *Apuntes íntimos*. St. Josemaría made use of the Notebooks he was writing not only in the context of his personal prayer, but also in the formation of those who took part in his apostolate. He soon realized that this way of proceeding had the drawback of making known some points that had to do with the intimacy of his soul; he therefore decided “to do a re-copying of that which refers to the Work of God,” separating

this from “what is personal to me”. [18] He worked along these lines during the summer and autumn of 1932, producing what would constitute the first version of *Consideraciones espirituales* in December of that year.[19]

This text occupied 17 typed sheets, with no indication of the author’s name. St. Josemaría was able to use hectograph copies of these in his priestly work. Without any separate chapters or sections, these pages included a series of considerations or points, numbered from 1 to 246, proceeding almost entirely from entries contained in the *Apuntes íntimos*. There is nevertheless a clear difference: in *Consideraciones espirituales* the author follows a systematic order that is different from the chronological order in which the entries appear in the *Apuntes íntimos*. St. Josemaría never explained the criterion by which he decided upon this organization of the material, although a careful reading of the points shows that in its basic nucleus, it anticipated the order which would appear in developed form in later versions of the text.

In the beginning of the summer of 1933, St. Josemaría decided to expand the earlier text, adding new considerations. Specifically, he added 87 new points, taken entirely from the *Apuntes íntimos*. Typed and reproduced on the hectograph, there were seven additional pages, with points numbered from 247 to 333. These copies did not have a cover, but the first page included the following heading: “*Consejos espirituales – Consideraciones espirituales (Continuación)*”. [20] The intention of continuity is clear. It is also clear that these new points were considered by the author to be a step towards a new edition of the whole work, requiring that the new points be integrated into the structure of the 1932 version, or an eventual modified structure.

St. Josemaría began this task of integration in February of 1934, and finished it within a few months. He did not limit himself to re-organizing the material already reproduced by hectograph, but expanded it further, adding more than one hundred new considerations taken from entries in the *Apuntes íntimos*, while removing or revising some that had been included in earlier versions. The author carried out this revision with a view to a new step he planned to take with regard to the publication of this material. He was thinking now not just of some mimeographed pages to distribute to those who were already part of or could become part of Opus Dei, but of a book published for a broader audience, including that wider circle of people to whom he was extending his priestly activity: especially university students, but also manual workers and other professionals. This new intended audience required the author to make editorial changes.

This version of *Consideraciones espirituales* was published by the Imprenta Moderna in Cuenca in the beginning of July 1934, with the name of the author given simply as José María (with no last name). Five hundred copies were printed. The considerations were grouped into 26 chapters, showing the order of the presentation. In contrast to the mimeographed versions, the points were not numbered, but rather separated from each other by a simple line. (It is not known why this change was made; the author went back to numbering the points in *Camino*.) There were a total of 438 considerations, or perhaps better said, there were 435, since three of them were repeated in the text.

The history of *Consideraciones espirituales* ends here. The author's dedication to his apostolic work, which increased greatly in the years 1934-1936, and the outbreak of civil war in July 1936, brought it about (among other developments) that the 1934 book would give way to another book, namely, *Camino*.

According to Pedro Rodríguez' reconstruction of the facts, the composition of *Camino* took place in two phases. The first in 1937, during the period of refuge mentioned above in the Honduran Legation.<sup>[21]</sup> The second took place in Burgos from 1938-1939. The correspondence and remembrances that have been preserved from the period in the Honduran Legation show that St. Josemaría dedicated a certain amount of time during those weeks to the preparation of new points or considerations, drawing them from notes about his spiritual life, from letters he wrote from the Legation to members of Opus Dei, and from his frequent preaching to those who accompanied him in the Legation. Approximately one hundred of the new points of *Camino* came from this period.

The definitive text of *Camino* was developed during the months spent in Burgos, from January 8, 1938 until March 27, 1939. Although he had had the idea of a newly edited and expanded version of *Consideraciones espirituales* from soon after his arrival in Burgos, intense dedication to this task only began in the middle of November 1938. From this date he began to review letters, preaching guides and other material he had available, gathering thoughts and phrases that could be incorporated into the text. He decided on the total number of considerations he wanted to reach, as a way of giving himself a goal to strive for: 999, a number chosen in honor of the Trinity. To reach this number, he had to add considerably to the number of points that were in the text published in Cuenca, and he worked steadily at this project. Those who lived with him in the apartment in Burgos frequently saw him copying texts, typing them or organizing them by themes in little piles on the bed which, given the lack of space, served him as a sort of counter or work table. On January 22, 1939, the number of points finally reached 999. As far as the content is concerned, the book can be said to have been finished at that point, although there still remained various details to be worked out.

St. Josemaría left Burgos two months later, on March 27, 1939. He had completed not only the total number of points that he wanted to include, but also the structure of the chapters or table of contents. He had also decided that the various points would be numbered sequentially, which would facilitate their citation and the development of a subject index, also in preparation.

Up to this point, the book retained the title of *Consideraciones espirituales*. Only later, already in Madrid, and at least in part due to considerations about the cover design, did St. Josemaría decide on the more concise and graphic title of *Camino*. During those months in Madrid he considered where the new book should be printed. The choice fell to Valencia, for technical reasons – principally, the availability of paper of good quality. Thus, the first edition of *Camino* finally saw the light of day on September 29, 1939, printed by *Gráficas Turia* with a run of 2,500 copies. Later editions follow this first one in all but minor modifications.<sup>[22]</sup>

We need not say more here regarding the content, order of exposition, literary style, etc. of *Camino*. It will suffice to refer the reader to the introduction and the chapter-by-chapter, point-by-point study offered by the critical-historical edition.[\[23\]](#)

### ***“Santo Rosario” [“Holy Rosary”]***

“We go to Jesus — and we ‘return’ to him — through Mary.” These words from number 495 of *Camino* express a conviction that St. Josemaría held all his life. It therefore comes as no surprise that one of his first books – or even the first, since in some aspects it was prior to *Consideraciones espirituales* – would be a work with a Marian theme: *Santo Rosario*.

There is a manuscript of this work in the archives of the Prelature, dated December 1931.[\[24\]](#) Through other sources, it is known that he composed those commentaries during the Novena to the Immaculate Conception, in the Church of Santa Isabel, in Madrid; specifically, next to the presbytery after having celebrated Mass.[\[25\]](#) The exact day of the Novena on which he wrote this is unknown, but on the day before the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, he read to two young men a text about “the way of praying the rosary,” a phrase that doubtless refers to the work we are considering.[\[26\]](#)

In 1932, he did a hectograph printing of this text, but no complete copy has been preserved. We know of its existence through references and remembrances, and also through an incomplete copy that has reached us.[\[27\]](#) In 1934, a printer called Juan Bravo in Madrid published an edition carrying only the first name of the author, just as the first edition of *Consideraciones espirituales* had done. In 1939, Gráficas Turia in Valencia, the same press that had done the first printing of *Camino*, published a new edition. It was in pamphlet format, but with an ample print run, and included the complete name of the author.[\[28\]](#)

Between the manuscript of 1931 and the editions published in 1932 and 1934, St. Josemaría introduced only some minor modifications. In 1945, he decided to publish this in the form of a book, rather than a pamphlet, and towards this end he undertook a new revision of the text. Besides making some stylistic corrections, he expanded the commentaries for various mysteries of the Rosary. Specifically, he completed the description of the biblical scenes that were the focus of each mystery, keeping the original commentary unchanged, and thus keeping also unchanged the fundamental purpose of the book: to help the reader to relive “the life of Jesus, Mary and Joseph,” as indicated in the words “to the reader” with which the book begins, and thus to experience, through faith, the depth and closeness of the love which God shows us in the Incarnation.

The 1945 edition of *Santo Rosario*, which can be considered the first edition of the expanded text, was printed by Editorial Minerva, in Madrid. The colophon indicates that the printing was carried out during the month of May 1945, and finishes with a Marian aspiration: *dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata*, which we can translate as “Holy Virgin, allow me to praise you.”[\[29\]](#)

### ***The “Instrucciones” of 1934 and 1935***

Already in the early thirties, the development of the apostolate led St. Josemaría to prepare works such as *Consideraciones espirituales* and *Santo Rosario* that could be published commercially, and thus placed within the reach of all those who in one way or another approached his priestly work. Within this apostolic expansion, the significant increase in the number of people who were joining Opus Dei – even if the total number was still small – united to the certainty, full of faith, that many more men and women would become part of the Work in the future, brought him also to write texts directed specifically to those who had joined or would join Opus Dei.

In some passages of his *Apuntes íntimos* written in 1933, he speaks of preparing texts that could be of use to those who would unite themselves to the Work, helping them to grasp more deeply the ideals and horizons that he was presenting to them in his preaching and in personal conversations. On April 24 of that year he wrote, “My God: you already know that I long to live only for your Work, and spiritually to dedicate all my interior energies to the formation of my children, with retreats, recollections, talks, meditations, letters, etc.” Two months later, upon finishing his retreat for that year, he noted: “Resolution: once I have finished obtaining the academic degrees, to launch out with all the preparation possible to give retreats, talks, etc. to those who seem like they might fit in the W. [the Work], and to write meditations, letters, etc., so that the ideas sown in those retreats and talks and in one-on-one conversations will endure.”<sup>[30]</sup>

The effort to obtain academic degrees, to which he refers as an immediate goal in that retreat resolution, took longer than he thought it would. Among other obstacles, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and the period of tension that preceded it made it difficult and finally impossible to proceed with his academic goals,<sup>[31]</sup> but he never wavered in his apostolic desire. With this desire, from which sprang the impulse to prepare new written works, he proceeded to note down ideas that he mulled over later in his prayer, to sketch possible outlines, etc. The two writings composed in 1934 were the first fruits of these spiritual efforts. The first was dated March 19, the feast of St. Joseph, and was entitled *Instrucción acerca del espíritu sobrenatural de la Obra de Dios* [Instruction on the supernatural spirit of the Work of God]. The second was dated April 1, the day on which Easter was celebrated that year, and bore the title *Instrucción sobre el modo de hacer el proselitismo* [Instruction on the manner of doing proselytism].<sup>[32]</sup>

As is evident, the name St. Josemaría gave to these two writings was not among the categories that he had mentioned in the notes from the previous year – meditations, letters – but a third type deeply rooted in both civil and canonical traditions: “Instruction”. The standard Dictionary of the Spanish language defines “instruction” as a “collection of rules or indications for the sake of some aim”. This is how St. Josemaría uses the word, albeit with the implications proper to the purpose that permeated all his apostolic work: to promote holiness and apostolate among people of the most varied situations and professions. This practical aim is evident in these *Instrucciones*, which are not limited to orientations and indications of an immediately applicable character, but include also doctrinal and spiritual considerations giving shape and strength to the text as a whole. Nevertheless, St. Josemaría always made clear that the *Instrucciones* we are

*discussing here and those that will be discussed later* were written keeping in mind the immediate circumstances, including allusions to passing details or events.

Both of the first two Instructions, and especially the first, presupposed the atmosphere of Spain of those years, which brought about the urgent need for texts that could give practical and doctrinal orientation. Some people were enthused with the fall of the monarchy and the establishment of the republic, while others were left unsettled and anxious. The outbreak of anticlericalism that had taken place, with its more extreme manifestations such as the burning of churches and convents and various assassinations, had left the whole Catholic world deeply worried. There were those who, in the face of these events, fell into an attitude of resigned pessimism. Many others – indeed the majority – were provoked to action giving rise among other things to the initiation or development of a wide range of apostolic movements and associations.<sup>[33]</sup>

In that historical context, St. Josemaría was very aware of the need to emphasize the specific nature of Opus Dei. Opus Dei had not been born and did not develop as a reaction to the events just mentioned, but as the fruit of an inspiration which not only preceded these events, but transcended them. “The Work of God,” he wrote in the Instruction of March 19, “was not dreamed up by a man to resolve the lamentable situation of the Church in Spain since 1931. Many years ago our Lord inspired it in a deaf and inept instrument, who saw it for the first time on the feast of the Holy Guardian Angels, October 2, 1928.”<sup>[34]</sup> From this starting point, St. Josemaría underlined the need for a profound and sincere desire for fidelity, as well as a sense of urgency to present a vibrant call to holiness to many souls, leading them, if this were the will of God, to incorporation into Opus Dei. This sense of apostolic urgency would be the theme of the second Instruction.<sup>[35]</sup>

The development of Opus Dei at the beginning of the 1930s, especially among the men, put the Founder in a position to promote cultural and apostolic initiatives that would serve as a point of support for the growth of the apostolates. Specifically, the DYA Academy was instituted in December 1933, a center with the mission of fostering study and the Christian formation of university youth. This Academy promptly gave rise, in August 1934, to a more ambitious project: a student residence, keeping the name of the Academy that had preceded it.<sup>[36]</sup>

The apostolic work carried out in DYA was the background for the third of the *Instrucciones* written by St. Josemaría: the *Instrucción sobre la obra de San Rafael* [Instruction on the work of St. Raphael], that is, on apostolic work among youth, dated January 9, 1935.<sup>[37]</sup> “I am not able to reach everything,” he wrote in the beginning of the Instruction, expressing clearly the motive and purpose of the document: to place in the hands of some of those who were already incorporated into Opus Dei, although they were young and inexperienced – the majority had not yet finished their university studies – part of the work that he had been carrying out personally until that point. This gives rise to the tone and content of the Instruction, which unites exhortations to faith, to confidence in God and to apostolic zeal with norms of prudence and practical indications, frequently based on experiences from the DYA Academy-Residence.<sup>[38]</sup>

Some months later, in May 1935, he began to write a new Instruction: the *Instrucción para la Obra de San Gabriel* [Instruction for the Work of St. Gabriel], intended to present some basic orientations for the expansion of the apostolate of Opus Dei in all social contexts and among all types of people, including those called to matrimony. Nevertheless, he realized that to complete this document it would be necessary to refer not only to the call to holiness in marriage, but also to the possibility of married people (or people with a vocation to marriage, even if still single) being incorporated into Opus Dei. This would require confronting some spiritual and juridical questions that in 1935 were still far from being resolved. Thus, there was a lapse of time between the first drafts and the finished composition, which we will take up in a later section of this article.

### ***Three “Circular letters”***

The DYA Academy as well as the later Academy-Residence were by their nature conditioned by the rhythm proper to the academic calendar. The work that was carried out there was, therefore, challenged by the interruptions of vacation periods, especially in the summer. When the end of the 1933-1934 academic year was approaching, St. Josemaría thought of a way to overcome or at least alleviate this interruption: to send the students related to DYA a monthly newsletter, printed by hectograph, which he entitled *Noticias*. These newsletters shared information taken from the letters that they wrote to each other, along with some words from St. Josemaría himself meant to encourage them in their Christian life and in their apostolic efforts.<sup>[39]</sup> The custom thus initiated continued in the summer of 1935, but was interrupted in July 1936 with the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. In January of 1938, after he had left Madrid and arrived in Burgos, where he was in a position once again to carry out his priestly work in a more normal fashion, St. Josemaría tried to gather as many addresses as possible of former DYA residents and relaunch *Noticias* right away.

The three Circular letters that he directed to the members of Opus Dei with whom he was able to reestablish contact were written in this context of the recovering an ordinary rhythm of life.<sup>[40]</sup> They were dated from Burgos, on January 9, 1938, January 9, 1939, and March 24, 1939, respectively. All three are handwritten letters, between 10 and 15 pages in length, preceded by a cover page on which appeared the handwritten expression “*Carta circular*”[“Circular letter”], followed by the date. The heading was that which was usual in many writings of St. Josemaría: “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and of Holy Mary.” The text continued with a greeting full of affection: “May Jesus bless my sons and take care of them for me,” introducing what he wanted to transmit in each occasion.

“My plan,” he wrote in the first of these Circular letters, “is to visit you, one by one. I will try to make this a reality as soon as possible. Until this much desired moment arrives, I am sending you with this Circular letter light, nourishment and means for you not only to persevere in our spirit, but also to sanctify yourselves with the exercise of the discreet, effective and manly apostolate that we live, just as the first Christians did.” Those words give an idea not only of the tone of this particular letter – which is kept up in the two that follow – but also of its content: recommendations and suggestions, written with a firm

hand, to encourage their growth in the spiritual life and their preparation for the development that the apostolate would see as soon as the wartime conflict ended. Written during the same months in which St. Josemaría was completing *Camino*, the three Circular letters together with *Camino* allow us to glimpse the vibrant supernatural atmosphere animating the founder of Opus Dei in those moments, which were decisive from so many points of view.[\[41\]](#)

### ***The monograph on “La Abadesa de las Huelgas”***

In 1918, when the young Josemaría told his father, José Escrivá Corzán, that he had decided to become a priest, his father advised him that without in any way compromising his formation for the priesthood or his later pastoral work, he should pursue studies in Law at the civil university. St. Josemaría did not allow this advice to fall on deaf ears, and in October 1922, with the prior authorization of his ecclesiastical superiors, he enrolled as an independent student in the Faculty of Law of the University of Saragossa. In 1927 he completed his studies for the licentiate in Law.

In November of 1924, José Escrivá Corzán passed away. From this moment on, St. Josemaría’s family became dependent upon him, since he was the oldest son: his mother, his sister Carmen and his six-year-old brother Santiago. A little later, on December 20, St. Josemaría was ordained a deacon, and some months later, on March 28, 1925, he received ordination as a priest, beginning the exercise of his priestly ministry right away. At that time, a series of events that we need not detail here[\[42\]](#) led St. Josemaría to decide to move to Madrid, where he could obtain a doctoral degree, which at that time in Spain was only granted in the University of Madrid.[\[43\]](#) With this purpose in mind he went to see the archbishop of Saragossa, who gave his approval.

In April 1927 he moved to Madrid and right away began making arrangements in the Faculty of Law, so as to enroll in the doctoral courses there as planned. He also looked for a source of income, finding a job as a professor in an academy dedicated to the preparation of Law students.[\[44\]](#) He also began to collaborate as chaplain in a well-known Madrid institution, the *Patronato de Enfermos*, which offered him the possibility of carrying out an ample apostolic-priestly work.[\[45\]](#) This was the context on October 2, 1928, when he received the light that, clarifying the inklings he had been sensing for years, placed before him the reality of a divine call moving him to spread among people of all social conditions the invitation to seek holiness and apostolate in the middle of the world; in sum, to give life to Opus Dei. It is not surprising, therefore, that his studies for the doctorate in Law proceeded somewhat slowly.

In any case, he completed the necessary coursework in the academic year 1934-1935. During those years he considered possible themes for the doctoral thesis required by the legislation at that time. In 1934-1935, he decided on one among the various possibilities he had considered: the ordination of *mestizos* and *cuarterones* in the early years of Spanish evangelization in the Americas. He gathered various materials for this research, but the outbreak of the civil war interrupted his work. He was only able to give attention to the doctoral thesis again two years later, in January 1938, when he set up residence in

Burgos after abandoning Madrid and the zone in Spain in which a fierce religious persecution was being carried out.

The material he had gathered in the beginning of the 1930s had remained in Madrid, beyond his reach and possibly having been lost. One of the people he knew in Burgos, the canonist and historian Manuel Ayala, suggested a different theme: the study of the unusual jurisdiction enjoyed for several centuries by the Abbess of the Cistercian monastery in Las Huelgas. This monastery was situated on the outskirts of Burgos, and its archive was available for consultation, allowing for a study of material that was both accessible and well-documented. St. Josemaría welcomed this suggestion. In a short time he was able to complete the research necessary for a brief thesis, as was then required for the doctorate, so that by December 1938 he had finished that phase of work. In April 1939, the civil war ended, and a little later the Central University in Madrid was able to resume normal academic activity. St. Josemaría was thus able to present the doctoral thesis he had prepared. It was defended and approved on December 18, 1939.

His academic journey thus reached its goal. Nevertheless, barely two months later, St. Josemaría resumed his research.<sup>[46]</sup> Neither the written documentation that has reached us nor the testimonies of those who dealt with St. Josemaría in those years tell us the reasons that brought him to decide to continue his research. Perhaps it is related to the fact that at this time he was taking some first steps towards the priestly ordination of members of Opus Dei who, formed according to its spirit, could give due attention to the various apostolates. More specifically, it may be related to the decision to ask those who were going to take this step to undergo a painstaking intellectual and academic preparation. In this context, it would be logical to surmise that St. Josemaría thought he ought to preach by means of example and do what was necessary to prepare and publish a work that would go beyond the doctoral thesis already presented. The fact is that, whether working in Madrid or on various trips to Burgos,<sup>[47]</sup> he continued the investigation until he completed a substantial monograph – more than 400 pages – which was published in 1944 and warmly welcomed in academic circles.<sup>[48]</sup>

### ***Preaching to the faithful of Opus Dei***

From the moment on October 2, 1928 when he felt the impulse to spread the call to holiness and apostolate in the middle of the world and in the most varied situations and professions, St. Josemaría began to carry out a broad priestly work along these lines. He dealt with people one on one, through informal conversations or spiritual direction, walking along the streets of Madrid or in the confessional. He also organized gatherings with small groups of people. These meetings, until they had their own location, took place around a table in a quiet cafeteria or in one of the little rooms of the house in which he lived with his mother and siblings. There, in the context of a family talk – of a get-together or *tertulia*, to use the Spanish expression that he always liked to use – he spoke of themes that were very varied, but which allowed him to open perspectives of holiness and apostolate in professional work and in the hundred-and-one circumstances of daily life.<sup>[49]</sup>

St. Josemaría always held the task of preaching in very high esteem, as one of the most characteristic tasks of the priesthood. In fact, from the beginning of his priestly activity, he exercised this ministry intensely, directing himself to a very wide variety of people, as we will see later on. Nevertheless, the lack of an appropriate place made it impossible at first for St. Josemaría to make use of this means of formation as part of the specific apostolate of Opus Dei. The first preaching with this purpose took place on January 21, 1933, in rooms that some nuns he knew allowed him to use; there was a talk, after which they moved to the chapel for exposition and benediction with the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>[50]</sup> Around this time, there were also some recollections and talks that he preached in rooms placed at his disposition by the Redemptorists of the church of Perpetual Help, on Manuel Silvela Street. When the DYA Academy began, and then gave rise to the Academy-Residence, it was possible to make use of the oratory installed there. From this time on, and especially since the day he celebrated the first Mass in DYAth, St. Josemaría preached there often.<sup>[51]</sup>

Some of the outlines which St. Josemaría used in giving meditations or talks during those first years to faithful of Opus Dei, to residents of DYA and to others who went to the Residence have been preserved.<sup>[52]</sup> This preaching is also spoken of in the diary that was kept in DYA, and there is reference also in various testimonies gathering the remembrances of some of those who were in attendance. There is less documentation regarding his preaching to the women who were coming closer to Opus Dei in those years, but it is clear that he gave them meditations and talks in the church of Santa Isabel mentioned above. In any case, from this preaching, whether to men or to women, only outlines or brief references or notes have come down to us, which, although they do give a sense of the tone and sometimes of the main points, do not allow us to reconstruct the full text as it was actually preached.<sup>[53]</sup>

The earliest relatively complete documentation about the preaching of St. Josemaría related directly to the promotion of Opus Dei as such dates from 1937. Specifically, it refers to the meditations that he gave during the stay in the Honduran Legation in 1937, to which we referred in passing when speaking of the sources and composition of *Camino*.<sup>[54]</sup> We add now that during those months spent in the Legation, the founder of Opus Dei frequently did his mental prayer out loud, for the benefit of the small group of those accompanying him. Ordinarily, this preaching took place in the morning, whether during a time of prayer before the Mass that St. Josemaría would celebrate afterwards, or as an immediate preparation for Eucharistic communion. Sometimes it took place in the evening, before retiring for the night.

One of the young men who shared this time of refuge with him, Eduardo Alastrué, had an excellent memory, which allowed him to transcribe these meditations in a summarized way soon after they had been preached. With the previous agreement of St. Josemaría, and with the caution required by the situation of religious persecution reigning in the capital of Spain during that time, these summaries were brought to members of Opus Dei who found themselves in other parts of Madrid and even in Valencia. A good number of those meditations – fifty in total – have been preserved.<sup>[55]</sup> The first is dated April 6, 1937;

the last, August 30 of the same year. The themes are very varied, although naturally, given the circumstances, there are abundant references to confidence in God, the communion of the saints, prayer, the desire to bring souls to Christ, and perseverance.[\[56\]](#)

When the Spanish civil war ended in 1939, the DYA Academy-Residence on Ferraz Street – which had been destroyed during the war – was succeeded by another on Jenner Street and later by a third on Moncloa Avenue, very near the university. Soon the members of the Work were making apostolic trips to various Spanish cities. It did not take long for new centers of Opus Dei to be established in Madrid as well as in other cities (Valencia, Valladolid, Bilbao, Zaragoza...)[\[57\]](#) All this offered St. Josemaría, the only priest of Opus Dei until 1944, new and more abundant opportunities to preach. From this era, various guides for meditations and talks have been preserved.[\[58\]](#) There are also note cards and loose outlines, more abundant than those still existent from the earlier period, but also more fragmentary.[\[59\]](#)

### ***Preaching to other audiences***

Immediately after his priestly ordination, St. Josemaría was assigned to the parish of Perdiguera, a small town in the Aragonese countryside where he stayed from March 31 until May 18, 1925. No documentation has been preserved from his preaching in Perdiguera, nor from that in Fombuena, another town he took care of during some weeks, nor from his work in the chaplaincy of the church of San Pedro Nolasco in Saragossa, where he lent his services from May 1925 until March 1927.[\[60\]](#)

The move to Madrid broadened his field of priestly activity. First, a little after arriving to this city, as chaplain of the *Patronato de Enfermos*: home visits to the sick, catechesis, and spiritual attention to the *Damas Apostólicas del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús*, on whom the *Patronato de Enfermos* depended. Later, from the summer of 1931 on, as the chaplain and later rector of the *Patronato de Santa Isabel*[\[61\]](#): attention to the Augustinian Recollect nuns of the Monastery of Santa Isabel and to the religious sisters of the Assumption along with the school they ran, Masses and hours of confessions in the Church of Santa Isabel... Thus, already since before 1931, he was in contact with a wide spectrum of people and institutions..

In the first years in Madrid, that is, from 1927 to 1931, he barely exercised the ministry of the word, since the pastoral work that had been entrusted to him and the ministerial licenses that had been granted to him directed his labors towards other aspects of priestly work, and the canonical legislation and practice then in force were very strict in this respect.[\[62\]](#) The situation changed in 1932, the date from which we begin to find preaching outlines, preserved in the collection to which we have already made reference.[\[63\]](#) The oldest of these, from the early 1930s, are guides for meditations or sermons preached in the *Patronato de Santa Isabel*, or, in other cases, to the Teresians, whose founder, St. Pedro Poveda, he had met in 1931 and with whom he had a deep friendship.[\[64\]](#) From 1938 on, the very numerous outlines that have survived are mostly for preaching to priests, as well as to religious communities and lay institutions.

As the end of the war approached, and even more when the conflict was over, the Spanish episcopate felt the need to promote initiatives to foster the spiritual life of the Christian people in general and of the clergy in particular. For this purpose, they had recourse to priests of recognized prestige, asking them to preach days of recollection and retreats. Among the priests asked to do this was St. Josemaría, who did an abundant amount of work along these lines.[\[65\]](#)

The outlines for some of this preaching are found in the collection we have already cited several times above. However, for much of it, it seems the outlines have not reached us or have not yet been found, although we must keep in mind that on occasions, as is usual for those who speak frequently, St. Josemaría made use of previous outlines, adapting them to the public he was addressing in each case.[\[66\]](#) After the death of St. Josemaría and as part of the work for the cause of his canonization, testimonies from more than fifty people who had attended these recollections or retreats were gathered. . Mostly, these are a matter of very fragmentary remembrances, but in some cases – for example, the references to the spiritual exercises preached to priests of the diocese of León from August 1-7, 1940, and to the seminarians of Valencia from November 2-9 of the same year – are relatively complete.[\[67\]](#) There is even a case of someone who later published the notes he had taken during one of these retreats.[\[68\]](#)

### ***Preparation for future books***

Now we leave off discussion of oral preaching and return to the topic of written works. The first printing of *Camino* took some time to run out – it had been a large print run – but was soon followed by two more, published in Madrid; one in 1944 and the other in 1945. St. Josemaría in no way thought that he could consider his work as an author finished once he had published *Camino* and *Santo Rosario* (whose fourth edition, as we said, came out in 1945), nor did he think that further work would be limited to new editions of works already published. On the contrary, he was already thinking about other books, as is shown by the immediate plans of work he charted for himself in 1938, in which references to specific issues alternate with allusions to possible books.[\[69\]](#)

Some of these possible books were to be similar to *Camino* in their literary genre, as is the case with two that have been mentioned: *Surco* and *Forja* [*Furrow* and *Forge*]. In other cases they were texts about spiritual questions to be written in a systematic or expository manner, judging by the titles that have reached us and the themes that these titles indicate: *En casa de Lázaro*; *Mujeres del Evangelio*; *Celibato, Matrimonio y Pureza*; *Dios con nosotros*; *Comentarios*; *Pescadores de hombres* [*In the home of Lazarus*; *Women of the Gospel*; *Celibacy, Marriage and Purity*; *God with us*; *Commentaries*; *Fishers of men*].[\[70\]](#)

The context in which these books are mentioned may lead one to think that *Surco* and *Forja*, as well as the others just mentioned, were texts intended for commercial publication and therefore for the general public. Nevertheless, it is possible that one or more might have been intended especially for the faithful of Opus Dei. The reality is, in any case, that regardless of the intended audience of these books, St. Josemaría was certainly thinking in those years of writing texts that could be used for the formation of those who were not only coming closer to his apostolate, but becoming part

of the Work. Such is the case of the *Instructions* of 1934 and 1935 which we have already discussed, as well as the other possible texts in the form of meditations or letters, intended to continue and complete the project of writing “meditations, letters, etc., so that the ideas sown in retreats and talks and in one-on-one conversations will endure,” as he wrote in the text from the *Apuntes íntimos* of 1933 cited earlier.<sup>[71]</sup>

It is worth remembering that in 1941, St. Josemaría requested the first written approval of Opus Dei from the bishop of Madrid, to complete the verbal approval already given several times. For this purpose he composed a *Reglamento* [*Bylaws*], to which were appended five complementary documents entitled *Régimen, Orden, Costumbres, Espíritu* and *Ceremonial* [*Rules, Order, Customs, Spirit* and *Ceremonial*]. On the basis of these documents, the bishop of Madrid granted approval in a decree dated March 19, 1941.<sup>[72]</sup> These documents confirm something that was already manifest in the *Instructions* of 1934 and 1935, as well as in *Camino*: that the founder of Opus Dei in the 1930s not only possessed a clear and detailed vision of the implications of the light and the mission he received on October 2, 1928, but also was able to express it with breadth and precision. Certainly in later years he would continue receiving new divine lights, making some consequences of the call more explicit and specifying various aspects, but Opus Dei was already present not only in its nucleus or germ, but in its full reality.

In this context it was logical, and even necessary, that he should consider not only writings intended to stimulate a life of prayer and promote an ever more fully Christian existence, such as *Camino*, but also other writings meant to explain the spiritual message of Opus Dei in a holistic way. Such explanations would no longer – or not predominantly – take the form of brief lines full of great expressive force in which the spirit of Opus Dei was described – “sculpted”, to use the word that St. Josemaría like to use – such as are found in various paragraphs of the *Instruction* of March 19, 1934 about the supernatural spirit of the Work of God, in the *Circular letters* of 1938 and in the documents about *Customs* and *Spirit* annexed to the *Bylaws* of 1941. Now there would also need to be thorough expositions including commentary, analysis, and development, without detriment to the direct style that St. Josemaría always preferred.

This second manner of proceeding, of which examples can be found in various passages of the *Instructions* of 1934 and 1935, was destined to occupy an ever more important place in the literary production of St. Josemaría. For some years already, together with the resolution to write new *Instructions*, he had on his mind the intention to prepare new writings of a decidedly expositive character, to which he alludes in the texts from 1930 with the generic name of “*cartas*” [“letters”]. He ends up giving this title to some of his writings, but writing *Carta* with a capital C, thus giving this word a meaning that we can call technical, analogous to the meaning it has in several authors of the classical era. That is to say, a careful exposition of a theme or of a set of related themes, composed with the tone proper to the epistolary genre, while directed not to a particular individual but to a whole group of people, or even to any possible reader.

Having this ensemble of projects in mind, in a very specific way in some cases or more generically in others, St. Josemaría worked during all this period – and, as we will see,

also in the periods that followed – with the methodology that has been described in the pages above regarding the composition of *Apuntes íntimos* and of *Camino*:[\[73\]](#) considering the themes in his prayer, taking brief or more extensive notes based on that prayer and on his personal experience, and saving those notes with a view to their later use, often keeping them in envelopes.

These very varied materials: incisive phrases, long, relatively well-developed paragraphs, more or less complete outlines, drafts of meditations... would offer the foundation, and sometimes even the outline or structure for meditations later preached, as well as for written works – *Instructions* and *Letters* – which we will discuss later in this article. Nevertheless, the fact is that from 1946 on, for reasons we will indicate in what follows, the publications to which this material was directed were postponed, in such a way that they did not reach their definitive form until years later.

## **FROM ST. JOSEMARIA’S MOVE TO ROME (1946) UNTIL THE END OF THE 1950S**

The interruption of St. Josemaría’s work of preparing and publishing written works of one type or another was closely connected to the need he had to dedicate himself to forwarding the expansion of Opus Dei and its juridical configuration. As mentioned above, between 1939 and the mid-1940s Opus Dei developed rapidly in Spain: expansion to various cities, apostolate with men and with women... Moreover, in 1943, a new juridical approval was obtained. This approval was very unsatisfactory as a long-term solution, but not inconsistent with that of 1941, and most importantly, it allowed for the priestly ordination of faithful coming from the ranks of Opus Dei. In fact, on June 25, 1944, the first group of priests of Opus Dei was ordained, a group consisting of Álvaro del Portillo, José María Hernández Garnica and José Luis Múzquiz.[\[74\]](#)

Thus, the foundations were established for the international expansion of Opus Dei, which the end of World War II made possible. In 1945 it began in Portugal, in 1946 in Great Britain and Italy,[\[75\]](#) in 1947 in Ireland and France. In 1948, Pedro Casciaro, who had been ordained a priest in 1946, made a trip through various countries of North, Central and South America, to obtain firsthand information with a view to the extension of the apostolate to that continent. The following year, the apostolates began in Mexico and in the United States. [\[76\]](#)

As we have just said, the juridical configuration that St. Josemaría had been able to obtain in 1943 was unsatisfactory, and even burdensome, since it was not adequate to the nature of Opus Dei. The growth of the apostolates now made it necessary to search for a new juridical solution, something which was beyond the scope of the canonical legislation then in force. There was at that time no juridical figure into which Opus Dei could be fitted without doing violence to its nature. Therefore, together with work related to the expansion of the apostolate, there was this other task, particularly urgent and even imperative: reflection and study so as to find a juridical path that would be consistent

with the theological, apostolic and spiritual reality of the Work, or that would at least reflect this reality as closely as possible.

This effort absorbed a great part of the energies of the founder, and led to his decision to live permanently in Rome, where he had arrived for the first time in 1946. He was aided in his efforts by the substantial collaboration of Álvaro del Portillo. As a fruit of his dedication, and of his numerous interviews with various Vatican officials (above all, with Pope Pius XII, who received him in an audience on July 16, 1946, soon after he arrived in Rome for the first time), Opus Dei was granted a first pontifical decree of approval in 1947, which was followed on June 16, 1950 by a decree of definitive pontifical approval.[\[77\]](#)

The juridical form according to which these approvals were granted (that of the Secular Institute) was not ideal. In fact, it was abandoned years later to make way for the current form, that of the personal Prelature. Nevertheless it underlined clearly the secular nature of Opus Dei, and, because it was a pontifical approval, it facilitated the expansion of the apostolates. Thus, in addition to the new countries already mentioned, in short order the apostolates of Opus Dei began in other places: Chile and Argentina (1950), Colombia and Venezuela (1951), Germany (1952), Guatemala and Peru (1953), Ecuador (1954), Uruguay and Switzerland (1956), Brazil, Austria and Canada (1957)...

At first it could seem that the pontifical approvals of 1947 and 1950, which represented the culmination of a stage in the juridical path of the Work, should have made it possible for St. Josemaría to resume his work as an author, without abandoning his attention to the governance and spread of Opus Dei. There is a document preserved in the archive of the Prelature, handwritten by St. Josemaría, dated “*Roma, 1949-1950*”. It consists of a long list of possible projects – more than one hundred – that the Founder of Opus Dei thought he could tackle in the upcoming years. Some of those possibilities were in fact carried out, and others not, but in any case, the text makes clear the great apostolic zeal that always burned in the soul of St. Josemaría, together with awareness of the broad development of his work made possible by the pontifical approvals.[\[78\]](#)

Most of the possible projects noted on that list made reference to specific apostolic initiatives, to encouraging the international expansion of Opus Dei, to the organization of tasks of government, etc. Nevertheless, there were also references to possible writings, especially texts oriented to the formation of those who were already incorporated or could be incorporated into Opus Dei. Two years before writing this list, in 1947, he had given to the printers a text in manuscript form, directed to all the faithful of Opus Dei, entitled *Catecismo [Catechism]*. This text, written in Spanish, was intended to explain the contents of the juridical norms approved by the Holy See and other aspects of the life of Opus Dei in straightforward language, without technicalities.[\[79\]](#) One of the points of the *Catecismo* was about documents with a formational purpose, among which are mentioned – using a phrase echoing what he wrote at the end of the 1933 retreat – “the spiritual documents, regulations, norms, instructions, commentaries, letters, etc. that are given to the members of Opus Dei for their formation, and for the preservation of the supernatural spirit they ought to have.”[\[80\]](#) Some of the possible projects mentioned in the 1949-1950 list are in continuity with this point of the *Catecismo*; in a sense, the list

contains a sort of prolongation or more detailed enumeration of the documents spoken of in this point.

In the years we are now considering, facing the expansion of Opus Dei, St. Josemaría thought above all about writings for the formation of the faithful of the Work. This did not exclude the development of works directed to the general public – on the contrary. It is no coincidence that in the “Author’s Note” written for the seventh edition of *Camino*, dated December 8, 1950, St. Josemaría speaks of *Surco* [*Furrow*] and expresses the desire to be able to complete its publication within the span of a few months.<sup>[81]</sup>

Nevertheless, some later events made it impossible for him to carry out that project and other analogous projects. In earlier years, Opus Dei had experienced not only misunderstandings and difficulties that could be explained – at least in part – by the novelty of its spirit and its apostolate, but even calumnies. In 1951 and 1952 these became more insistent and grave. Various indications and a warning sent by the archbishop of Milan, Blessed Cardinal Schuster, who knew and admired him, made St. Josemaría fear that in some parts of the Roman Curia they were thinking of dividing Opus Dei into two institutions – one for men and another for women – and removing him from any relation with its apostolates. His confident prayer to Holy Mary, to whom he consecrated Opus Dei on August 15, 1951, and his rapid and decisive intervention reaching the pope himself, were able to eliminate this danger.<sup>[82]</sup>

The events of 1951 and 1952 did not slow the spread of the apostolate of Opus Dei, which by the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s not only had consolidated its presence in the countries already mentioned, but had gone beyond the borders of Europe and America to reach various nations of Asia, Africa and Oceania. Nevertheless, they did have important consequences for the Founder’s work as a writer. Because of these events, some of the ecclesiastical authorities with whom the founder of Opus Dei had a special friendship and confidence advised him – in words that made it clear that the advice was really more of a command – to try to appear in public as little as possible, so as not to give even the least pretext to those who might think up new attacks against Opus Dei.<sup>[83]</sup> St. Josemaría accepted this advice – which happened to coincide with one of his spiritual mottoes: “to hide oneself and disappear, so that only Jesus may shine”<sup>[84]</sup> – and he concentrated his efforts on the governance of Opus Dei and on attention to the members of the Work, both men and women, who came to Rome to complete their formation.<sup>[85]</sup> Public appearances and the preparation and publication of new books would have to wait for another moment.<sup>[86]</sup>

In fact, during this period we can point to only two publications and his preaching. Two of them, a 1948 conference presentation about the Constitution *Provida Mater Ecclesia* and Opus Dei, and the 1950 conclusion of the *Instrucción sobre la Obra de San Gabriel*, were written earlier than the events to which we have just alluded. The third, his preaching to the faithful of Opus Dei, covers the whole of this period.

### ***Presentation about the Constitution Provida Mater Ecclesia and Opus Dei***

The promulgation on February 2, 1947 of the Apostolic Constitution *Provida Mater Ecclesia* and the approval of Opus Dei granted a few weeks afterwards caused a considerable ripple in the whole Catholic world, giving rise to numerous articles and commentaries in the press. This is not surprising, since *Provida Mater Ecclesia*, with all its limitations, represented a significant step towards proclaiming the possibility of holiness in the middle of the world, and thus of the universal call to holiness and apostolate.<sup>[87]</sup>

Naturally, given this context, the founder of Opus Dei received several requests for official statements or commentaries. St. Josemaría decided to accept an invitation from one of the most well-known Spanish lay institutions: the *Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas*, in whose offices in Madrid he gave the presentation to which we now turn our attention, on December 17, 1948.<sup>[88]</sup>

St. Josemaría began his address with a solemn declaration:

The Church, living body that it is, shows its vitality with the immanent movement animating it. Often this movement is something more than a mere adaptation to the environment: we see God intervening in it with a positive and lordly ímpetus. The Church, led by the Holy Spirit, does not pass through the world as along an obstacle course, trying to avoid barriers or exploring paths of least resistance. Rather she treads the earth with a firm and sure step, opening herself the way.

The Founder of Opus Dei thus situated *Provida Mater Ecclesia*, and the subsequent approval of Opus Dei, in the heart of the profound movement by which the Holy Spirit was preparing the proclamation of the universal call to holiness. He expanded on this theme throughout his address, commenting on some points of the Constitution and speaking about Opus Dei and its approval as a Secular Institute. We cite, from this second part, a passage that can help us understand the importance and meaning of this approval, as well as that of later steps in its juridical path. Opus Dei offers its members, he affirmed, “the solid religious formation required for acting in the world: above all, it sows in them the necessary interior life to be apostles in their own environment.” He continued:

One who cannot go beyond the classic models of perfection will not understand the structure of the Work. The members of Opus Dei are not religious – to give an example – who, full of holy zeal, exercise the professions of lawyer or doctor or engineer, etc. Rather they are simply lawyers, doctors, engineers, etc., with all their professional idealism and their characteristic features, for whom their profession itself, and naturally all of life, takes on a full meaning rich in consequences when completely oriented towards God and saving souls.<sup>[89]</sup>

### ***The “Instrucción sobre la obra de San Gabriel”***

The pontifical approval of 1947 was the beginning of the path that would eventually allow people with a vocation to marriage to be incorporated into Opus Dei, with all this would imply for the growth of the apostolate. However, there were still a few milestones to reach before this possibility would be formally established. Specifically, there were two rescripts of the Holy See (one on March 18, 1948, and the other on September 8, 1949) and finally

the definitive pontifical approval granted on June 16, 1950, in which the role of the Supernumeraries of Opus Dei was fully welcomed and sanctioned.[\[90\]](#)

During this time, St. Josemaría had been speaking with some of the married people to whom he had been giving spiritual direction for many years, suggesting to them the possibility of incorporation into the Work. The two rescripts mentioned above allowed them to formalize this step, in such a way that when the pontifical approval of 1950 was granted, Opus Dei already had among its members a certain number of married people, and had extended the field of its apostolate to people of the most varied social conditions, men and women, single and married.

St. Josemaría decided that the moment had arrived to finish the *Instrucción sobre la obra de San Gabriel*, which he had begun in 1935. Starting with the paragraphs he had written earlier, he rapidly completed this Instruction: it was already finished in September 1950. In the original manuscript that has been preserved, the definitive text consists of one hundred pages densely written, without any margins, and with the broad handwriting that was characteristic of St. Josemaría. As a testimony to the history of the document it carries two dates: May 1935, and September 1950. Typewritten and photocopied, it circulated right away among the members of Opus Dei. In 1967, together with the other *Instrucciones* and with notes written by Msgr. Álvaro del Portillo, it was printed.[\[91\]](#)

### ***Preaching to the faithful of Opus Dei***

St. Josemaría arrived in Rome for the first time on June 23, 1946. From this moment on he considered Rome to be his home city, and also the home of the central government of the Work, although for a while some of its governing bodies – the General Council and the Central Advisory – would have to continue operating in Spain. Between his arrival in 1946 and the spring of 1949, when he was able to move permanently to Rome, St. Josemaría had to divide his time between Spain and Italy, with periodic stays in both countries.

During the months he spent in Spain in those years, St. Josemaría often preached to members of the Work, and on many other occasions enjoyed conversations with them in familial get-togethers. Some of these meditations, talks or get-togethers were tape-recorded.[\[92\]](#) Efforts to tape-record him were interrupted when he moved permanently to Rome, as much because of the difference in their living conditions – the buildings that were to become the central offices of Opus Dei were still under construction[\[93\]](#)– as because of the limitations of the recording equipment available in those years.

Although the tape-recording ceased, St. Josemaría's preaching did not. If anything, it increased. The establishment of the Roman College of the Holy Cross (in 1948) and the Roman College of Holy Mary (in 1953), already mentioned above, brought many generations of men and women of Opus Dei to Rome, close to the founder. Among them were some of the first men and women to join Opus Dei in the various countries to which the Work was spreading. Once the construction was near enough to completion, the central governing bodies of the Work transferred to Rome as well: the Central Advisory, for the apostolate with women, moved in 1953, and the General Council, for the apostolate

with men, in 1956. St. Josemaría poured himself out in pastoral attention to those who were at his side.

Those who heard the preaching of St. Josemaría were not resigned to let his words be lost, even though it was not possible to tape-record him at that time. Whether individually or in an organized way, they made efforts to take careful note of what he said. In the two Roman Colleges they formed teams made up of people who could write quickly or who knew shorthand. They took charge of writing everything down during the meditations or get-togethers, gathering later to compare their notes until they arrived at very accurate reconstructions.<sup>[94]</sup> Their work has provided us with 115 transcripts of meditations or talks from the period we are discussing (1950 to 1959).<sup>[95]</sup>

### **FROM THE END OF THE 1950S UNTIL JUNE 26,1975**

As we pointed out in the beginning of this article, from the end of the 1950s on there was tremendous growth in the literary production of St. Josemaría. Some of the reasons for this change were particularly related to the life of Opus Dei, while others had more to do with historical and cultural development in general.

The first circumstance we should mention – without which the other factors would not have had any impact – was the constant growth of the apostolate of the faithful of Opus Dei. As we have already mentioned, at the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties, the apostolate not only had spread to nearly every country in western Europe and the Americas, but had also reached Africa (Kenya and Nigeria), Asia (Japan and the Phillipines) and Australia. The small group of people who gathered around St. Josemaría in 1939 grew in scarcely twenty or thirty years to several thousand. (There were 60,000 by the time of the death of the founder.) And some of the faithful of Opus Dei who were young students in the 1930s or 1940s by now had attained even international reknown in their profession, in culture, in politics, etc.

These facts, and others we could mention, could not pass unnoticed, especially in a world like ours, characterized by ease of communication, rapid transmission of news and the high value placed on transparency. In fact, public interest and media interest in Opus Dei and its founder grew ever more intense, starting in the mid-1950s.

St. Josemaría spent time in England from early August until the beginning of September, 1958. A well-known English journalist named Tom Burns took notice of his presence in the country. Burns worked at that time for the daily newspaper called *The Times*, and was later director of a weekly publication called *The Tablet*. He requested an interview. This interview gave rise to a long article appearing in *The Times* on August 20, 1959, in a section called *People to watch*.<sup>[96]</sup> This was the first expression of a relationship between St. Josemaría and the international press, a relationship which would continue to develop in the years ahead.

Almost at the same time – in 1960 – there began another phenomenon, intimately tied to the growth of Opus Dei: get-togethers of St. Josemaría, not just with small groups, but with thousands of people at a time. In 1952, some faithful of Opus Dei, welcoming the suggestion and encouragement of the founder, had started a university-level academic center in Pamplona, the capital of the former kingdom of Navarra in the north of Spain. This center, originally called the *Estudio General de Navarra*, started small, but grew and developed quickly.<sup>[97]</sup> The Holy See erected the *Estudio General de Navarra* as a university on August 6, 1960, promulgating a decree to this effect that was published on the following October 25 in a solemn academic ceremony. Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer was present at this ceremony as Grand Chancellor of the new university.

Before going to Pamplona, he had stayed some days in Madrid, and then in Saragossa, where the local university granted him an honorary doctorate. Many people went to see him during this trip, even if only from afar, in each of the three cities.<sup>[98]</sup> Four years later, in 1964, this happened again in Pamplona, on the occasion of the Assembly of the Friends of the University of Navarre. More than 10,000 people gathered in the capital of Navarra for this occasion, attracted not only by the Assembly, but by the possibility of meeting with the founder of Opus Dei. In addition to the official academic ceremonies, St. Josemaría had various encounters with groups of people over the course of those days. The most numerous took place in the largest theater in Pamplona, with the public filling the hall. As was natural for him, the founder was able to transform this multitudinous gathering into a meeting with the atmosphere of a family get-together. He skipped over the usual opening speech, and after a few words, opened up a dialogue with the audience. There was an animated exchange of questions and answers. With his vibrant personality and his capacity for improvisation he was able to keep this conversation at once lively and focussed, the whole time.<sup>[99]</sup>

We could mention many other similar events in Spain and in other countries, culminating in the large get-togethers that marked his travels through Spain and Portugal in 1972 and in the American continent in 1974 and 1975. Before speaking about these trips, we must mention another factor that was decisive for the period we are considering. This series of events transcended Opus Dei, but had a tremendous influence on its life, as it did on all of Christianity. We are speaking of the changes that began to take place in the Catholic Church starting from the election of John XXIII as Roman Pontiff on October 25, 1958, and above all, the announcement on January 25, 1959 of his decision to call an Ecumenical Council, which would become known as Vatican Council II.

The preparation for the Council, its celebration and the approval of its constitutions, decrees and conciliar declarations, created a new situation in the Church. All this also led to the appearance and spread of various writings on theological and canonical matters – expository works, or works of research and analysis – touching on more than on occasion on themes very close to the heart of St. Josemaría, inasmuch as they were related to the mission he had received on October 2, 1928: the universal call to holiness, the participation of every Christian in the mission of the Church, the value of earthly realities, pluralism and the freedom of Christians in temporal matters, the vocational character of

every Christian state of life... In various ways, all these themes had been the object of his preaching for many years, and they continued being so as time went on. This was also the case during the years of the Council, when he had the occasion to speak at length with a large number of Conciliar Fathers.

Without any doubt, throughout the period we are discussing, there were great developments in the life of the Church, but there were also tensions and confrontations, especially beginning in 1968, in connection with the enormous cultural changes that were taking place. This conjunction of realities, both positive and problematic, could not be a matter of indifference to anyone who loved the Church, and St. Josemaría loved it deeply. In the depths of his soul he asked himself what he ought to do, as a Christian, as a priest and as founder of Opus Dei.

Nor should we forget that as the 1950s advanced, St. Josemaría became more and more convinced that Opus Dei should abandon its configuration as a Secular Institute, so as to move towards a juridical-canonical solution more appropriate to its nature. At the end of that decade, he decided to take public steps in this direction. In 1959-1960 he submitted the first formal petition in this regard to the Holy See, and reiterated the request in 1962. Both petitions were well received, although Pope John XXIII pointed out that for a decision of such magnitude, it would be better to wait until after the Council, so as to take its indications into account. St. Josemaría willingly accepted this delay, while pointing out that Opus Dei no longer considered itself to be in fact a Secular Institute, although it continued being so in law. From this time on, with this perspective, he followed the development of the work of the Council with particular interest, especially as it led to the creation of the juridical figure of personal Prelatures, opening the way for a solution like that desired by the founder of Opus Dei. [\[100\]](#)

The conjunction of circumstances we have outlined above gave particular urgency to the task of leaving a clear record, spoken and written, in private and in public, of the theological, spiritual and apostolic reality of Opus Dei. This was necessary to prepare the ground for when a definitive step could be taken towards the new juridical solution. A rich and detailed testimony of the message of Opus Dei had to be left as a legacy for future generations. St. Josemaría thus felt the need to give new attention to his work as a writer, giving life to texts that were aimed specifically towards the formation of the faithful of Opus Dei, as well as other texts for the general public.

Before turning to consider these various texts, we should dedicate a few brief paragraphs to St. Josemaría's way of working during the period we are discussing. Although his method was clearly in continuity with the one he followed for earlier works, it went through some changes that should be kept in mind.

The founder of Opus Dei continued preaching and writing in a way closely connected with his spiritual experience and his apostolic activities. He kept up the custom of taking note of lines from the Gospel, of thoughts that arose in his prayer or of events that helped him to go deeper in his misión and in his work. He would review these notes, or those from

earlier years, to meditate on them again and apply them to his life and work. From this point of view, there was no change.[\[101\]](#)

From another perspective, there was a significant change in the means at his disposal, with several practical consequences. The move of the General Council and the Central Advisory to Rome and the ongoing development of their organization and work, along with that of the two Roman Colleges, meant that St. Josemaría would never again find himself in a situation like that of Burgos in 1938, where he himself had to type up and organize in “little mountains” the points that were to be published in *Camino*.[\[102\]](#) In the fifties, sixties and seventies, the context had changed, and St. Josemaría could count on an able secretary to help him in his work in various ways: typing up texts, seeking or checking citations, preparing outlines or notes, etc.

One strictly technical factor completes this panorama: the improved quality of taperecorders and other recording devices. As already mentioned above, this allowed for greater ease and fidelity in recording meditations and get-togethers, avoiding the inconveniences that had made this difficult in earlier years. This had implications that affected his way of working. St. Josemaría himself explained it in a letter he wrote on November 1, 1966 to Florencio Sánchez Bella, who was then Counselor of Opus Dei:

Rereading these papers [he refers to the Letters to which we will turn our attention shortly], I realize that times have changed. I used write things by hand or on a typewriter that was more or less archaic. In either case, I made the corrections by hand. Now, since 1950, more or less, I have used a tape recorder or dictaphone, and I haven't left you a trace of my handwriting in all this time. For me, it is better, faster and more comfortable to work in this way. I talk, they bring me what I have said typed and double-spaced, and the tape can be re-used many times. Besides, it's cheap.[\[103\]](#)

We should add one thing regarding the method of work that the founder of Opus Dei explains in the words just cited. The texts that were typed and double-spaced from the tapes, or the outlines developed from texts or ideas of his by those who helped him as secretaries, were reviewed carefully by St. Josemaría, more than once. This meant that a clean copy of the text had to be made between one review and another. Obviously, this took a certain amount of time, and St. Josemaría did not like to give people unnecessary work. Therefore, when he returned the revised texts, he would often comment that it was not necessary to retype the whole thing; it would be enough to retype the lines in which there were corrections, and then, cutting and pasting, put the pages back together.

In the years when I was working in the offices of the General Council, this indication was given to me several times, as it was to others who worked there.[\[104\]](#) There were occasions when it was simpler to retype a whole page, but many other times it was feasible to “cut and paste”, so that is what we did. Certainly, this saved time, but the result was that each successive draft was destroyed in the process. All that remained were the cut-up pieces. It is not surprising that St. Josemaría would indicate – as in fact he did – that those cuttings should be discarded. For this reason, although there is a clear record

of the final text of the interview, homily or other writing in each case, there is no record of the drafts that had preceded it.

This way of working allowed St. Josemaría to save time for the people who collaborated with him, and to achieve the large volume of writings to which we turn our attention below. But it also had historical-critical consequences. In effect, although there is abundant documentation allowing one to trace the history of the composition of the writings of this period, it is not possible to do so with the detail with which one can analyze the writings from the 1930s, particularly in comparison with *Camino*.

### ***The series of “Letters”***

On his way to Belgium in 1964, the future cardinal Julián Herranz had a conversation with Gustave Thils, professor of Dogmatic Theology at the Catholic University of Louvain. During the course of their exchange, Herranz explained some characteristics of the spirit of Opus Dei: the value of created reality, the sanctification of work, the profound meaning of the lay vocation... At a given moment, Thils, wanting to get a more complete understanding of what he had been hearing, interrupted to ask: “All of this that you are telling me... in what book is it written down?” Herranz answered that he had simply been reflecting extemporaneously on the life and spirit of Opus Dei. In response to the theologian’s insistence on the need to have all that put into writing, Herranz reassured him by saying that Opus Dei’s founder had, indeed, put it all of it into a series of letters and instructions directed to the faithful of Opus Dei.<sup>[105]</sup>

As a matter of fact, beginning in the 1930s, St. Josemaría had not only published *The Way* and the other works spoken of above, and composed various documents for use by the members of Opus Dei such as the *Instructions* already mentioned. As we have mentioned in earlier pages, he had also been assembling outlines, notes and drafts as well as other materials in preparation for new writings he had in mind. Toward the end of the 1950s and into the early 1960s, St. Josemaría took up this task again in a decided manner, dedicating a substantial portion of his time to the task. Between 1960 and 1965-1966, he undertook the formal editing of a wide collection of texts, getting them ready so that they could be used immediately for the formation of those who formed part of Opus Dei, and so that later, some years after his death, they might be published, if those who succeeded him thought it prudent.

Why did St. Josemaría undertake this task precisely at this time? While there were a variety of reasons, we can trace it back to two that were fundamental. The first is related to the cultural and ecclesial context explained above. One point deserves special mention: toward the end of the 1950s, St. Josemaría decided that the time had come to publicly move away from the figure of the Secular Institute in order to find an appropriate juridical configuration for Opus Dei.<sup>[106]</sup> This decision, along with the consequent need to present proposals and to engage in juridical negotiations, made it advisable and even necessary for him to set out a clear exposition of the fundamental elements of the spirit of Opus Dei. There were documents for him to start with in which this was already sketched out, but now he would write at greater length, explaining things from the beginning. St. Josemaría also wanted to comment in writing, for the benefit of the Work’s faithful, on the

historical development of the juridical-ecclesial configuration of the Work of God, and the constant efforts that had been necessary to safeguard the essence of the spirit of the Work during that process. From this source sprang the two series of closely interrelated *Letters* we will consider in what follows.

For this project, St. Josemaría would have to have at hand the papers written before his move to Rome. Starting from these, he could tackle the project of finalizing those documents that he had been thinking of for many years, but which he had not been in a position to complete until this time.

This leads us to the second reason that we alluded to earlier. It was a difficulty of a very different order, but as frequently happens with the materials from which finished texts emerge, it was a determining factor. Simply put, until the mid-1950s, it had been impossible for St. Josemaría to access those earlier papers that would form the basis of the texts he wished to compose.

When the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, St. Josemaría, like most of the clergy of Madrid, had been obliged to flee his place of residence. He left all of his papers – the notebooks that would later constitute the *Apuntes íntimos*, and other documents – in the care of his mother. Doña Dolores Albás guarded them carefully, hiding them in her mattress lest an anti-clerical government official or military patrol find them during a raid. Once the war was over, St. Josemaría had been able to recover these materials, but only temporarily.

Soon enough, it became obvious that continued precautions were necessary to keep these materials safe, for Spain had emerged from a devastating civil war only to find herself on the sidelines of the rapidly developing continental conflict that would become World War II. In the environment of uncertainty bred by these events, persons in some religious and totalitarian political groups initiated campaigns of suspicion against Opus Dei, yet again raising the possibility of searches and raids that threatened the loss or destruction of these documents.<sup>[107]</sup> As a result, St. Josemaría decided to put a substantial portion of the materials related to the government of the Work, along with his personal papers, into some suitcases to be left with the families of some of the first members of the Work: specifically, the families of Álvaro del Portillo and José María Hernández Garnica.<sup>[108]</sup> The suitcases remained there until the 1950s, when St. Josemaría had them retrieved by some members of the Work – including Javier Echevarría, his personal secretary.

St. Josemaría's personal papers – at least the great majority of them – had thus remained in Madrid even after he moved to Rome in 1946. They could not be moved to the Italian capital until an appropriate location for the central headquarters of the Work could be found and adequately installed: Villa Tevere, to which we have already referred above. Renovation of the existing building took several years. During some time, part of the General Council of Opus Dei – with the authorization of the Holy See – remained in Madrid, for lack of space in Villa Tevere. Despite the distance, the Council kept in constant

contact with Rome where St. Josemaría worked, always accompanied by Álvaro del Portillo.

In the autumn of 1956, even though construction work on the definitive site of the central offices of Opus Dei was not yet finished, it had advanced enough so that the General Council could move to the Eternal City, near the See of Peter, as the founder had wished from the very beginning<sup>[109]</sup>. At this point, all of the documents of government as well as all of St. Josemaría's personal papers could finally be moved to Rome.

When they arrived, the materials related to the government of the Work were distributed to the corresponding offices or to the archive, then situated in a spacious area near the offices of the General Council.<sup>[110]</sup> St. Josemaría's personal papers—including those written before 1936—were, in their majority, placed in an oratory-library situated next to the work room of the founder of Opus Dei,<sup>[111]</sup> according to the testimony of Msgr. Javier Echevarría, who collaborated in the task. The rest were stored in the archive.

During the following years, St. Josemaría had recourse to the materials in the oratory-library whenever he thought it opportune, including those of earliest origin. At times, he showed some of them to those who lived and worked most closely with him.<sup>[112]</sup> Logically, as he reviewed these early documents, he added marginal notes and points that had been written in later years. However, it was not until the late 1950s and early 1960s that he took up all these papers again with a more intense effort, in order to complete the *Instructions* and to give final form to the *Letters* which we will now consider.

At this time, St. Josemaría thought it opportune to bring together all of his personal papers—both those at hand in the oratory-library and those in the archive. This meant that all the documents in the archive would have to be reviewed in order to find those that were written by the founder himself. The statutes of Opus Dei, in order to maintain close relations between the central government of Opus Dei and the various regions or countries in which its apostolic activities take place, provide for the role of delegates, who live in one country or another but spend time periodically in Rome. In 1963 the delegates—or *missi*, as they were then called—went to Rome for a period of several weeks, longer than their typical stays. In addition to their usual meetings and work sessions, St. Josemaría asked them to dedicate some time to reviewing the archived materials in order to locate and separate out the texts written in his own hand.<sup>[113]</sup>

As noted above, the writings kept in the oratory-library as well as those that came from the archive varied widely in their nature and their date of origin. There were some brief notes on a variety of themes; folios or half-sheets of paper on which a thought or teaching in some stage of development was recorded; more or less developed outlines, at times accompanied by complementary texts in a more or less ordered manner; ideas and summaries prepared for meetings related to the St. Raphael work; outlines for meditations and retreats, etc. Some of these documents had no indication of the date of their composition; others had been dated, or at least contained information that allowed their dates to be construed by a careful reader. A number of the older papers, now

yellowed with age, had been written as long ago as the 1930s or the beginning of the 1940s; others came from the latter years of the 1940s or the 1950s.

This general description of the content of St. Josemaría's papers, based as it is on the testimonies previously cited, especially that of Msgr. Javier Echevarría, shows that some of these texts, such as the summaries of circles and outlines for preaching, directly reflect specific, developed pastoral activities; others point towards documents only in their beginning stages, not yet completed. Thus we see that the project of preparing instructions, commentaries, letters, etc. noted by St. Josemaría in his *Apuntes Intimos* in 1933<sup>[114]</sup> and reaffirmed in later moments such as the 1947 edition of the *Catechism*<sup>[115]</sup> had not been simply a dream or a wish. His intention had already been put into action, as the papers preserved in the oratory-library and in the archive demonstrate. Many of the materials that St. Josemaría was reviewing in the 1960s were clearly intended as the first steps towards texts he had been thinking about for a long time – the *Instructions* that were still pending completion and the collection of *Letters* – and he was now going to bring these projects to fruition.

Let us now consider the work carried out in this regard by St. Josemaría during the 1960s, beginning with the series of *Letters*.<sup>[116]</sup> As we have mentioned above, it is important to remember here that the concept of *Letter*, as St. Josemaría applied it to the documents we are about to discuss, evokes the notion characteristic of the classical and patristic tradition that was later adopted as customary in ecclesiastical writing—that is, a document in the form of a letter, expository in tone, sent not to an individual but to a particular group of people in order to explain with some breadth a particular theme or idea. In the ecclesiastical tradition, such letters often deal with philosophical or theological questions, spiritual observances, the orientation of Christian life, etc. The *Letters* we are considering here deal specifically with the spirit, apostolate and history of Opus Dei.

It is important to note also St. Josemaría's plan was not to prepare merely one or several separate letters; rather, he intended to write what he himself at times qualified as “the series of *Letters*”.<sup>[117]</sup> This was his plan from the beginning, taken up again in the 1960s. These would form an organic ensemble of texts that explained the constitutive features of the spirit and apostolate of Opus Dei, together with the key milestones of its juridical history. Thus, the *Letters* would remain an inheritance or testimony that would constitute a point of reference for those future generations of people who would come to know Opus Dei.

To develop these *Letters*, St. Josemaría began with the notes, schemas and outlines that had been preserved, considering their content and their early date of origin. He was moved by a deep awareness of his role as founder, reliving the moments in which his preaching had expressed with special force the various aspects of the spirit of Opus Dei, and at the same time, grasping ever more deeply the implications of its message.

This is not the place to consider in detail the factors that contributed to the breadth of human, spiritual and intellectual development St. Josemaría had attained by this time;

that is a task more proper to his biographers, to whose works we refer the reader. It suffices to mention here that this maturation was due above all to his personal prayer and his spiritual experience, but also to other influences related to the development of Opus Dei, and to his meditation, in light of the foundational charism, on the context in which his own life and that of the Work had been unfolding. For example, general cultural developments, the celebration of the Second Vatican Council and the whole movement of ideas related to that Council, as well as other events in the history of the Church and of the world, etc.

The point we wish to emphasize here is that it was from this deep Christian maturity that St. Josemaría took up the task in the 1960s of giving final form to the earliest *Letters*, which had until then remained merely sketched out, and of writing new ones. In keeping with the goal which he had set for himself as founder, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, St. Josemaría used the materials mentioned above to compose a unified collection or series of *Letters*. Always respecting the substance of what was written in those early papers, he did not hesitate to complete or expand upon their contents whenever he deemed it appropriate to do so, in order to develop ideas on spirituality or points of doctrine outlined earlier. As a result, the finished versions of the *Letters* offer an explanation of the message of Opus Dei that reflects the doctrine contained in the older texts, expressed with the precision of language and thought St. Josemaría had achieved through his experience as founder and his deepened understanding of the foundational charism over the course of the years.

During this process, St. Josemaría wrote in Spanish, his native language. Early on, he thought of sending the *Letters* to the faithful of Opus Dei not only in Spanish, as they had originally been written, but also in Latin, in order to highlight the firmness of the foundational teachings they contained by means of the sense of permanence the Latin language connotes. As a matter of fact, Latin translations of some of the first *Letters* he finished were sent to the various countries, followed shortly by copies in the original Spanish.

Soon after, however, St. Josemaría abandoned the idea of translating all of the *Letters* into Latin, along with another related idea: the possibility of titling each letter by its *incipit*, that is, by the opening words of the Latin version, following a usage frequent in ecclesiastical documents wherein the opening words are chosen so as to express in some way the content of the whole. Having discarded that idea, however, St. Josemaría had to find some other system of citing or referring to each of the texts. He settled upon the method of reference that we have used in this article, i.e., by using the word “*Letter*” followed by its date.[\[118\]](#)

In the *Letters* dated from the late 1950s or the 1960s, these dates are simply that of their actual composition. In the *Letters* that bear older dates, however, they reflect the dates of the materials from which they were developed. In other words, the dates borne by the older *Letters* are not the dates when they reached their final form – which was between 1963 and 1965-1966 – but rather when the substance of that *Letter* was not only in St.

Josemaría's mind and in his preaching, but also written down, in those older papers we have been discussing.[\[119\]](#)

The fact is – and here we take up the thread of history once again – that from the late 1950s on, and especially between 1962 and 1965-1966, St. Josemaría worked intensely as an author, without scanting in the least his dedication to the tasks entailed in governing Opus Dei.[\[120\]](#) The result of this effort is the *corpus* or collection of thirty-seven *Letters*. The first of these is dated March 24, 1930, at that time the feast of the archangel St. Gabriel; the last is dated October 24, 1965, then the feast of the archangel St. Raphael.[\[121\]](#) The *Letter* of March 24, 1930 deals with the sanctification of ordinary life and everyday duties, as indicated by its Latin *incipit: Singuli dies*. The *Letter* of October 24, 1965 deals with apostolate. The words chosen for its *incipit, Argentum electum*, are taken from Proverbs 10:20, which describes the conversation of one who seeks God and aspires to make him known to others.

Analyzing the content of the thirty-seven documents that comprise the series of *Letters*, it is possible to organize them according to various criteria.[\[122\]](#) We will limit ourselves to noting that it is possible to detect two distinct series in this collection of *Letters*:

1. twenty-five *Letters* are written to explain aspects of the spirit and apostolate of Opus Dei;[\[123\]](#)
2. the other twelve *Letters* are dedicated to explaining the scope and significance of the various phases of Opus Dei's juridical itinerary from the first steps in the 1940s, to the papal approvals of 1947 and 1950, and on to preparation for the ultimate juridical solution which would be attained in 1982, after St. Josemaría's death, but based on his writings and indications.[\[124\]](#)

We will now make some observations to describe the *Letters* (even if only in summary fashion, as is appropriate for our current purpose) and the distinction between the two series we have just mentioned.

First, the length of the letters varies widely. In a format with pages of 24×17 cm, they range from seven to almost four hundred pages long. On average, they run between some sixty to eighty pages each.

Second, the *Letters* with the earliest dates deal with aspects or basic points of the spirit of Opus Dei (the *Letter* of March 19, 1930 speaks, as noted above, of the sanctification of daily life; that of March 24, 1931 with the spiritual life and, particularly with prayer as the foundation of all Christian existence; that of January 9, 1932 with work as a means of sanctification and apostolate as well as the freedom and responsibility with which each person ought to carry out his or her obligations...). Subsequent *Letters* specify or develop topics already addressed in the earlier *Letters*. Others open up new perspectives (such as, for example, the priesthood, a topic St. Josemaría deals with in *Letters* written after the priestly ordination in 1944 of men who had belonged to Opus Dei already as laymen).

Third, although the distinction between the *Letters* intended to explain aspects of the spirit and apostolate of Opus Dei and the *Letters* concerned with its canonical itinerary is

in itself clear, nevertheless, reading the texts makes clear that these two themes are intertwined, and for a very good reason. From a juridical-canonical perspective, the entire history of Opus Dei is, in effect, the result of the founder's search for a configuration that would reflect the reality of its spirit. That is why historical-juridical considerations in these texts are always accompanied by extensive development of ideas of a spiritual nature: references to sanctity and apostolate in the middle of the world, considerations regarding secularity, analysis of the virtues and their implications for people specifically called to live in the ordinary conditions of human and social life, etc.

Fourth, and finally, moving from reflection on the content of the *Letters* to an examination of their style, we can say that all of them have what we could call an epistolary tone, with language that is direct and reminiscent of a family letter. They certainly follow an outline or specific line of thought, but – as the author pointed out in various moments – they deliberately and decisively avoid all rigidity in their language and any tone of a treatise or exhaustive exposition. In other words, there is nothing about them that could confine their message to a preconceived outline, constraining the free flowing of the spirit.

As previously noted, once St. Josemaría considered the revision of a *Letter* complete, he sent it to be printed. The process of revision lasted until 1967. Around the middle of 1964, he sent to the Regions the *Letters* that had been printed until then. Later on, new texts were sent out as they were finished. This first printed edition of the *Letters* thus circulated, even if only in a limited fashion, among the faithful of Opus Dei.[\[125\]](#)

Some time later, in 1969, St. Josemaría decided to embark upon a general revision of the entire series of *Letters*. The first editions were consequently withdrawn from circulation. The 1969 revision of the first seventeen *Letters* – that is, those dated from March 24, 1930 to October 7, 1950 – was carried out by St. Josemaría on texts that had been typed double-spaced on 15.25 x 10.75 cm sheets of paper.[\[126\]](#) The Latin *incipit* followed by the date of the *Letter* appears on the first page of each. Comparison of the texts reveals that all of them were typed in the same format, using only two typewriters, both of them manual (i.e., not electric).[\[127\]](#) This leads us to believe that they are the original clean copies prepared to send to the printers once St. Josemaría had finished his editorial work in the period from 1963 to 1965/1966. These original typed texts, according to an annotation by Msgr. Javier Echevarría which we will cite in its entirety later on, are the documents St. Josemaría would have used for his 1969 revision, making a number of handwritten corrections on them that were, in all instances, merely of detail rather than of substance.

Beginning with the *Letter* of January 9, 1951, and until the end (that is, until the *Letter* of October 25, 1965). St. Josemaría followed a different method of work: he no longer made his revisions on a typed draft of a text, but rather, on a copy of one of the printed first editions that had been withdrawn.[\[128\]](#) These corrections are also merely alterations of detail, and are similar in number to those found in the earlier *Letters*. Quite a few of the corrections are in the handwriting of St. Josemaría himself; others, more numerous, are written by Msgr. Javier Echevarría.

These changes in the method of working are explained by Msgr. Echevarría on the cover page of the *Letter* of January 9, 1951, in a lengthy handwritten annotation, written in red ink and dated May 26, 1969:

After using the first printed edition of the Letters, the Father made some handwritten corrections on the text, which have been copied onto typed sheets of paper. These typed pages therefore contain the definitive text. [...] Since the typed final drafts of the *Letters* from 1951 on were not preserved, the Father has been dictating to me the corrections he wanted to make in those letters so that I could put them into a printed copy.

In this same note of May 26, 1969, Msgr. Echevarría explains that “in order to avoid possible errors in future editions,” St. Josemaría decided to have destroyed all the previously printed copies there were of the *Letters* in Rome and in the Regions to which they had been sent. The authorized texts of the *Letters*, then, are the typewritten or printed copies left as they were in 1969 when they had been revised.[\[129\]](#)

### ***The last two “Instructions”***

Among the tasks that St. Josemaría included in the list of possible activities already cited, dated “Rome, 1949-1950”,[\[130\]](#) one finds the preparation of new *Instructions*, referring to texts other than the *Instruction for the work of St. Gabriel*, which was finished in 1950. He spoke specifically about a second *Instruction of St. Raphael*, an *Instruction of St. Michael*, and an *Instruction* about the broad range of apostolic initiatives. Making use of earlier texts and ideas, just as he had with the *Letters*, he took up this project again in the 1960s, and prepared two *Instructions*: the *Instruction for Directors* (which, as we will see, can be understood to correspond to the second *Instruction of St. Raphael* spoken of in the 1949-1950 list) and the *Instruction for the work of St. Michael*, thus bringing the total number of *Instructions* to six. The plan of a separate *Instruction* regarding the variety of apostolic works was either abandoned or incorporated into the cycle of *Letters*.

The *Instruction for Directors* is situated in the context alluded to by the phrase in the *Instruction on the work of St. Raphael* already cited above: “I cannot reach everything.” St. Josemaría had always tried to avoid any possessiveness in the apostolate, since, as he often repeated, the Work was not his, but God’s. Now, just as with the DYA Academy-Residence, so also with the formation of those who were becoming part of Opus Dei, and all that referred to the expansion of the apostolate: he realized that the moment had come to lean on others, and to trust them fully. This meant he had to help those around him feel their responsibility to move Opus Dei forward, and give them adequate formation for the task. This is the purpose and the content of the *Instruction*, which reflects the experience of government of the founder of Opus Dei. St. Josemaría, as we have already indicated, finished writing this in the beginning of the 1960s, making use of material dating from the 1930s. It is dated May 3, 1936: the end of the academic year that had seen the consolidation of the DYA Academy-Residence, and when St. Josemaría was thinking about the expansion of the apostolate not only to other Spanish cities, such as Valencia, but also to Paris, as a point of support for future developments.[\[131\]](#)

The *Instruction for the work of St. Michael* has an editorial history analogous to that of the *Instruction for Directors*: starting from earlier outlines, St. Josemaría completed the text in the beginning of the 1960s. It is dated December 8, 1941, a time when Opus Dei had experienced a marked growth, especially among the men; there were then more than 100 faithful of the Work, and the earliest “study weeks” or “work weeks” (as St. Josemaría usually called them) had already taken place: gatherings of several days directed specifically towards the formation of people in the Work. This is the context, with its own very specific circumstances but at the same time pointing towards broad future horizons, that the founder of Opus Dei had before him as he gathered the earlier materials and finished editing this *Instruction*. With strong and incisive phrases, he traces out the some of the essential features of the spirit and apostolate of the Work, and of the formation required for its members.[\[132\]](#)

### ***“Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá de Balaguer”***

We now turn our attention from writings composed for the faithful of Opus Dei to those directed to the general public, which were also very significant in this period.

Although St. Josemaría preferred to avoid public appearances, not only in the beginning of the 1950s but also in later years, nonetheless he never refused to meet with anyone when the circumstances made these encounters logical and natural, including meetings with large groups or with the press. Jacques Guillemé-Brulon, the Madrid correspondent of the French daily *Le Figaro*, participated in a gathering that took place in Pamplona in 1964, on the occasion of the Assembly of Friends of the University of Navarra. A little later, in the middle of 1965, he expressed a desire to interview St. Josemaría, a petition he would later reiterate.[\[133\]](#) The founder of Opus Dei accepted his request, indicating that he would be happy to receive him and answer his questions. He set only one condition: that the questions would be put in writing, so that he could also answer them in writing. In March of 1966, the questionnaire prepared by Guillemé-Brulon arrived in Rome. Some weeks later, on April 1, St. Josemaría received him in Rome and gave him the text of the interview, with the questions answered. It was published in *Le Figaro* one month later, on May 5.

The impact of the publication of the interview in *Le Figaro* led St. Josemaría to consider that granting press interviews could be a helpful way to transmit his testimony as the founder about the nature of Opus Dei, and eventually to address doctrinal themes that were very much alive in public opinion, since the recent celebration of the Second Vatican Council. The next two interviews, in the autumn of 1966 and the beginning of 1967, were requested by the Madrid correspondents of the *New York Times* (Tad Szulc) and the weekly magazine, *Time* (Peter Forbath). In both cases, St. Josemaría followed the method established for *Le Figaro*: questions were given and answered in writing, while the interviewer was at some point also received in person.

St. Josemaría answered all the questions that were presented to him in these three interviews. And he did so at length, entering deeply into the topics presented to him and fully explaining his thought. The result was that in these interviews, and in those that followed, the founder of Opus Dei was not only the subject interviewed, but really the

protagonist; in other words, he could properly be said to be the author of the resulting texts. While attending to the requirements of brevity and quick deadlines expected by the means of social communication, St. Josemaría calmly and carefully explained his ideas, revising the draft several times – up to seven or eight revisions in more than one case – so as to achieve both precision of language and a polished style.[\[134\]](#)

In October of 1967, there was another gathering of the Assembly of the Friends of the University of Navarre.[\[135\]](#) For this occasion, St. Josemaría granted two interviews: one to Pedro Rodríguez, director of the journal *Palabra*, which specialized in doctrinal themes, and the other to Andrés Garrigó, director of the university journal *Gaceta*. Both were distributed widely among the numerous participants in the Assembly of Friends, which began on October 8. The first act of the Assembly was a solemn Mass celebrated by St. Josemaría on the esplanade of the university campus, with more than 30,000 people in attendance. The founder of Opus Dei delivered a lively homily, which was later titled “Passionately loving the world.”

The richness of these texts led to the idea of gathering them together into a book. St. Josemaría was amenable to this suggestion, but advised waiting for some time to pass.[\[136\]](#) In later months, the founder of Opus Dei agreed to two more interviews: one with Pilar Salcedo, the director of *Telva* magazine, about the role of women in the life of the world and of the Church, and the other with Enrico Zuppi, director of the Vatican weekly publication entitled *L'Osservatore della Domenica*. The first of these was published on February 1, 1968; the second, in two segments, on May 16 and 19 of that same year.

Shortly before the publication of the interview in *L'Osservatore della Domenica*, but after it had been requested by Enrico Zuppi, St. Josemaría agreed to publish a book containing all the interviews he had granted, along with the homily given in Pamplona. He also approved the title, *Conversations with Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer*.[\[137\]](#) The first Spanish edition was published by Ediciones Rialp in Madrid. It was printed on September 12, 1968, and spread widely right from the beginning, in Spanish as well as in other languages.[\[138\]](#)

### ***“Christ is Passing By” and “Friends of God”***

In the months that followed the appearance of *Conversations*, St. Josemaría received various requests for new interviews. At first, he leaned towards acceding to at least some of these requests, even though he thought it would be opportune to let some time pass before doing so. However, when he returned to consider the matter in November of 1969, he decided that for the time being, he would not grant any further interviews.[\[139\]](#)

In the documents that have survived there is no text that offers an explanation of this change in his decision. Nevertheless, we can suggest two possible reasons. On the one hand, St. Josemaría may have seen that he had already given all he could to the interview genre: the questions sent to him tended to repeat themselves or address matters of only secondary interest. At the same time – and this is more likely to have been the determining reason – during those months he had discovered another possible way of connecting with the various means of social communication, one especially suited to his

priestly condition: the publication of spiritual writings (meditations or homilies), prepared on the basis of texts from his oral preaching.

This “discovery” took place in the middle of 1968, through a request made to him by the Parisian review, *La Table Ronde*. The editorial board of this cultural journal, which had just published the homily given by St. Josemaría some months previously in Pamplona,<sup>[140]</sup> had decided to dedicate a whole issue to Jesus Christ, and they wanted to count on his contribution. The founder of Opus Dei accepted the request, and within a few weeks, sent the text of a homily about the reality and salvific action of the Risen Christ. Translated into French by the Hispanic scholar, Paul Werrie, it appeared with the title “Christ’s Presence in Christians” in *La Table Ronde* in November of 1968.<sup>[141]</sup> The original Spanish text was published at almost the same time in the Madrid journal *Palabra* and in the collection “*Folletos Mundo Cristiano*”.

The publication of these texts gave rise to a desire among the members of Opus Dei and people close to its apostolate to have access to other meditations or homilies of the founder. He was not insensible to these sentiments and the resulting requests. Over the course of 1969, St. Josemaría had four other homilies published, all with liturgical themes: Christmas, the feast of St. Joseph, the season of Advent, and the month of May as a time especially dedicated to Mary. Each of these homilies was also published in the collection of *Folletos* already mentioned,<sup>[142]</sup> after their appearance in the publications that had requested them (one Italian and three Spanish)

After the publication of the homily about the month of May, which took place during that month itself, some time passed before St. Josemaría submitted new texts for publication. In March 1970, the homilies began to appear again at a quicker pace: two in 1970, two in 1971, and nine in 1972.<sup>[143]</sup> As he had done with the homilies published earlier, St. Josemaría began from meditations or homilies he had preached for which he had more or less complete notes or outlines. These texts were amply revised by the author, who completed phrases or ideas, adding citations of Sacred Scripture or the Fathers of the Church, expanding on some themes...The method of work was that already described earlier in these pages: a careful revision of successive versions, passing from one to the next by means of a system of “cutting and pasting.” Once the text reached the form that St. Josemaría considered definitive, it was submitted for publication in some magazine or collection of pamphlets.<sup>[144]</sup>

The fact that the first five homilies were more or less related to liturgical seasons or feasts leads one to suppose – and there are texts that confirm this – that there was a unified plan in the mind of St. Josemaría, even if only in implicit form. In any case, sometime between the middle of 1970 and the beginning of 1972, this plan was made explicit and clearly decided upon.<sup>[145]</sup> This decision explains the increased pace of publication of meditations, especially during 1972. St. Josemaría was thinking of a book of homilies that would encompass the whole of the liturgical year, from Advent until the feast of Christ the King, including also some saint’s days of special significance. Thus came about the eighteen homilies that make up *Christ is Passing By*, whose first edition, published in Madrid by Ediciones Rialp, was printed on March 19, 1973.<sup>[146]</sup>

The book met with great success.<sup>[147]</sup> Nevertheless, St. Josemaría did not consider this so much of an accomplishment as an encouragement to keep making use of this form of “written preaching”, so congenial to his priestly soul. In fact, already in 1973 he began to work towards the publication of another book of homilies, this time not with a liturgical theme, but anthropological-spiritual. Specifically, it would be a series of homilies about the virtues that are fundamental for human and Christian development.

In March of 1973, at the same time that *Christ is Passing By* was published, the first of this new series of homilies appeared in print, dedicated to humility. Between March and that summer, seven more were published. The last, with a Marian theme, entitled “Mother of God and Our Mother”, was published on August 5, the feast of the dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major. St. Josemaría was prevented from finishing the revision of the other meditations he had planned on by various factors: the need to dedicate time to tasks related to the government of Opus Dei, a series of catechetical trips that we will refer to later in this article, and, last but not least, the loss of his strength due to age. By the time of St. Josemaría’s death on June 26, 1975, there were eight homilies in the series that had been published while he was alive, and another ten that were well on their way through the process of development and revision.<sup>[148]</sup>

Msgr. del Portillo, who had succeeded St. Josemaría at the head of Opus Dei, was faced with the need to decide between two possibilities: to limit himself to continue spreading the homilies that had already been published during the lifetime of St. Josemaría, or to publish also those texts whose revision had already been completed or nearly completed by the founder of Opus Dei, texts which would have been published if God had given him more time on this earth. He decided on the second option, as he himself explains in the foreword to the second volume of homilies of St. Josemaría: “In this second volume of homilies we have gathered together some texts that were published while Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer was still with us here on earth, and others from the many which he left for later publication, because he worked unhurriedly and kept working to the end.”

The result was a book formed by a total of eighteen homilies, which, as Msgr. del Portillo explains, “present a broad picture of the basic human and Christian virtues for all who wish to follow closely in the footsteps of Our Lord. [...] They contain living doctrine and combine a theologian’s depth with the evangelical clarity of a good shepherd of souls.” The work, entitled *Friends of God*, was published in Madrid, with its first printing on December 30, 1977.<sup>[149]</sup> Just as had happened with *Conversations* and with *Christ is Passing By*, it did not take long for this book to reach a wide audience.<sup>[150]</sup>

### ***Academic discourses and other writings***

In the 1960s and 1970s, St. Josemaría participated in various academic events. For some of these, he was asked to prepare discourses or presentations. The earliest, and one of the most extensive, is the one that he gave at the University of Saragossa, when he was granted an honorary doctorate on October 20, 1960.<sup>[151]</sup> The five discourses that he gave in Pamplona in his capacity as Grand Chancellor of the University of Navarra should also be mentioned: the first was during the solemn academic ceremony celebrated on October

25, 1960, for the formal establishment of the institution as a University; and the other four when honorary doctoral degrees were granted in 1964, 1967, 1972, and 1974.[\[152\]](#)

Other discourses, not of an academic character, include the one he gave in Pamplona on October 25, 1960, in the ceremony in which the city council named him an adopted son of the capital of Navarra; in Barcelona, on October 7, 1966, when he was named an adopted son of that city; and in Barbastro, on May 25, 1975, when that city granted him a gold medal.[\[153\]](#)

Also in the context of an official ceremony, this time ecclesial rather than civil, he gave a welcoming speech to His Holiness Paul VI when the Roman Pontiff formally inaugurated the Centro ELIS (*Educazione, Lavoro, Istruzione, Sport*), on November 21, 1965. Centro ELIS is a significant social development project situated in Tiburtino, one of the most densely populated neighborhoods of Rome. It had been entrusted to Opus Dei by John XXIII. His successor, Paul VI, wanted to be there in person for its solemn inauguration.[\[154\]](#)

Finally, to complete this section we will mention three writings of a spiritual nature: one article about Christian freedom published in *Los domingos de ABC* (Madrid, November 2, 1969) with the title “*Las riquezas de la fe*,”[\[155\]](#) and two articles with a Marian theme, specifically about the devotion that St. Josemaría always had towards Our Lady of the Pillar, as a good Aragonese. These appeared in publications in Saragossa in 1970 and 1976.[\[156\]](#)

### ***Preaching to the faithful of Opus Dei***

Just as in the 1950s, so also in the 1960s and 1970s, St. Josemaría dedicated himself generously to the task of preaching to the faithful of Opus Dei who lived in the central headquarters of the Work, as well as to those members of Opus Dei who passed through Rome for various reasons. A substantial part of the content of this preaching – indeed, almost all of it – has survived, in part because of those who took careful notes, and especially because the development of technical means made it possible to record his meditations and get-togethers in a systematic manner from the latter half of the 1960s onwards.[\[157\]](#)

At this time, there are recordings of 15 meditations, 20 talks, and more than 100 get-togethers. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that St. Josemaría preached much more frequently than this. During some time, the practice was to re-use the tapes for new recordings, once the meditations or get-togethers that had been recorded there had been transcribed and typed. Later on, they stopped doing this, and began to preserve each tape. There are 124 transcripts of meditations (10 preached outside of Rome), and a considerable number of transcripts of get-togethers.[\[158\]](#)

Finally, we should point out that throughout the early 1970s St. Josemaría revised the texts of some of the meditations that he had recently preached, and others from earlier years, so that they could be used for the formation of faithful of Opus Dei. Some appeared in the magazines we have mentioned earlier, *Crónica* and *Noticias*.[\[159\]](#) After his death,

these meditations – 23 in total – were gathered into a book with limited circulation, under the title *En diálogo con el Señor*.[\[160\]](#)

### ***The “Letters” written after 1965***

The documentation we have available leads us to affirm that by 1965 – except for the revision carried out in 1969 – St. Josemaría considered himself finished with the task of preparing and publishing *Letters*, in the sense mentioned above: ample, expository texts, directed to the faithful of Opus Dei. The events of later years, and more specifically the tension and crisis that the Church underwent in the years after 1967 and 1968, led him to change his mind. His sense of the responsibility that fell on his shoulders as the founder and head of Opus Dei, with respect to the spiritual life of its members, led him to compose new *Letters*, now directed to strengthening his readers in the faith and Christian life, rather than to explaining aspects of the spirit or juridical history of Opus Dei.

This is the purpose that drove him to write a long letter at the beginning of 1967, dated March 19, the feast of St. Joseph. The *Letter* opens with the words *Fortes in fide*, taken from the Latin version of the first epistle of St. Peter (1Pt 5:9), and continues: “this is the way I see you, my beloved daughters and sons: strong in the faith, giving testimony of your faith with this divine fortitude in every corner of the world, moved by the impetuous power of the Holy Spirit in a new Pentecost.” In fact, this entire Letter, which is very long (190 pages, in a version printed in a 24×17 cm. format), is an invitation to firmness in the faith, in the context of the complex situation the Church and society was going through in those years, and with a desire to respond to the Year of Faith convoked by Paul VI one month earlier, on February 22, 1976.[\[161\]](#)

In the *Letter* we are considering, the founder of Opus Dei begins with an explanation of the intimate connection among the sources of Revelation (Scripture, Tradition and Magisterium), and then continues with a commentary on the fundamental truths of Christian dogma, from the Trinity and creation to the fullness of eschatological consummation, with abundant biblical and magisterial citations throughout the text. He concludes by returning to the opening theme: the need for firmness in the faith, leading one to give witness and carry out apostolate.[\[162\]](#)

For many years, St. Josemaría had the custom of writing a letter to the groups of faithful of Opus Dei who were going to receive priestly ordination. Ordinarily, these letters were brief: one page, or even less. In 1971 he decided to send them a longer text. He also decided that this would be printed and sent to the other members of Opus Dei as well. The resulting *Letter* is dated June 10, 1971, and is 19 pages long, in a version printed in a 16×12 cm. format. It is written in clear continuity with the *Letter* of 1967 just described, although the tone and some of the themes are different, as is fitting for a document directed immediately to those preparing to receive the sacrament of Orders.

The *Letter* to priests of 1971 foreshadowed, in some way, three *Letters* that he directed to all the faithful of Opus Dei, between March 1973 and February 1974. St. Josemaría called these “the three bells,” alluding to the ancient custom of calling people to Holy Mass by means of three successive ringings of the bell. “Once again I seek you out,” he wrote in the

beginning of the third letter, “‘sounding the bell’ anew. I feel it is my duty to alert you, and I do so in the traditional way of summoning the faithful to Christ’s sacrifice: repeatedly ringing the bells. [...] This letter is the third invitation in less than a year urging you to face squarely the demands of our vocation, amid the hard trial the Church is undergoing.”

The first of these *Letters* is dated March 28, 1973; the second, June 17 of the same year; and the third, February 14, 1974. All are several pages long,<sup>[163]</sup> and though they deal with different questions, at least in part, all manifest the same spiritual attitude and express the same purpose, clearly expressed in the words that we have just cited in the preceding paragraph.<sup>[164]</sup>

### ***A great catechesis***

St. Josemaría was always very respectful of the authority of the various ecclesiastical authorities. Since 1950, therefore, except for responding to specific invitations or requirements, he ordinarily limited his preaching to the faithful of Opus Dei and to those who were close to its apostolates. His deep awareness of the crisis that was brewing during the 1970s, not only in the Catholic Church but in all of western civilization, led him to once again extend his preaching to a wider audience, without in any way encroaching upon the competence of local authorities.

Between 1972 and 1974 he decided to publish three meditations about the Church, intimately related to the cultural situation to which we have just referred. These were not included in *Christ is Passing By*, probably so as not to break up the thematic unity of that book. The titles with which he submitted them to be printed are very significant: “The supernatural aim of the Church,” “Loyalty to the Church,” and “A priest forever.”<sup>[165]</sup>

The publication of these homilies was only one of the consequences of the universality of his priestly zeal. And it was not the most important, or at least not the most extensive and significant: in fact, this apostolic eagerness led him to undertake a project to which he dedicated the greater part of his energies in the last years of his life: the catechetical journeys. The first of these (to Mexico) took place in 1970; the last (Venezuela and Guatemala) in 1975. Between these two extremes there were two months of catechesis throughout Spain and Portugal in October and November of 1972, and three months in 1974 (from the end of May to the end of August) in which he was able to travel through many countries in Latin America (Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela).

During those trips, in small gatherings or with thousands of people at a time, St. Josemaría – who turned 70 years old in January 1972 – gave himself completely, even to the point of compromising his health and endangering his life, to the task of strengthening the faith and encouraging a deeply Christian life among the thousands of people to whom he had the opportunity to speak.<sup>[166]</sup>

It is not easy to calculate the total number of people who heard him, since the meetings were of very varied size: in some cases, there were fewer than one hundred people; in others, such as those that took place in the *Palacio de Convenciones* in *Parque Anhembi*, in Sao Paulo, or in the *Centro de Congresos General San Martín*, in Buenos Aires– there were

between five and six thousand people in attendance. In all of these encounters St. Josemaría ordinarily followed the same pattern: he began with some words of introduction, and then turned to allow the public to ask questions, which he would answer with the quick reflexes and agility of mind that always characterized him. Even in the largest gatherings, he was able to maintain an atmosphere that was simple, friendly and familial, just as he had managed to do in the gatherings that took place during the assemblies of the Association of Friends of the University of Navarra, to which we referred above, and in various gatherings in Rome.

He spoke about quite varied topics, as is to be expected, given his methodology of questions and answers. Nevertheless, there are some fundamental themes that run throughout, giving unity to his catechesis. Above all is love for God, One and Triune, the center of Christian faith; and, as a consequence, a vivid awareness of divine filiation, of identification with Christ and docility to the Holy Spirit. Intimately connected with Trinitarian faith, the Eucharist – the Mass and the Tabernacle – presented as the center of the interior life, along with filial devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Confidence in the benevolent and merciful love of God, and thus, the sacrament of Confession, in which divine love reaches the depth of the soul of him who, recognizing himself to be a sinner, yet longs to grow in faith, love and hope. And many other realities: the sanctification of work and of the various circumstances of ordinary life; marriage lived as a human and Christian vocation, a school of humanity and of the virtues; the dignity of every human being, called to intimacy with God, no matter what his or her state in life or condition might be; service to others, being builders of justice and sowers of peace and joy; the value of life, from the moment of conception until the moment of death; the Christian meaning of suffering and of self-giving...

The great majority of these get-togethers were recorded; in many cases, they were filmed. There are a total of 857 recordings,<sup>[167]</sup> of which 115 are also filmed,<sup>[168]</sup> which has allowed (and continues to allow) generations that came after the death of St. Josemaría to get to know not only his thought, but also his way of speaking and expressing himself, his particular way of being.<sup>[169]</sup>

## **POSTHUMOUS WORKS**

This overview of the writings and preaching of St. Josemaría makes it clear that on June 26, 1975, that is, at the moment of his death, the founder of Opus Dei left behind not only a significant number of already published works, but also a much greater number of texts that still could be considered for publication. These writings were left in various stages of development. In some cases, the documents were completely finished, although the author indicated that they should only be published after his death. Other works were almost in their final form. Some texts, coming from his oral preaching, would require the usual revision and elaboration in order to be published. Then there are some isolated sentences or passages taken down by one or more of his hearers, or taken from his preaching outlines, etc. And, finally, there is the abundant fruit of his letter-writing,

consisting in several thousand letters directed to people of the most varied conditions and nationalities.<sup>[170]</sup>

St. Josemaría's successor, Msgr. Álvaro del Portillo, was faced with the decision of whether or not to publish those texts which St. Josemaría had expressly intended for publication, given that some of them were nearly finished. He was inclined to go ahead, as he did in the case of the volume of homilies entitled *Friends of God*, to which we have already referred, as well as in the three works we will now consider: *The Way of the Cross*, *Furrow* and *Forge*.

### ***“The Way of the Cross”***

“The Way of the Cross. Here indeed you have a sturdy and fruitful devotion! Spend a few moments each Friday going over those fourteen points of our Lord's Passion and Death. I assure you that you will gain strength for the whole of the week.”<sup>[171]</sup> This point of *The Way*, which unites two traditional devotions – accompanying Jesus along the way that led to Calvary, and dedicating Fridays to commemorating the passion and death of Our Lord – testifies to how deeply St. Josemaría meditated and encouraged others to meditate on the life of Christ, especially his self-giving on the Cross. His preaching on many occasions revolved around these transcendent moments in which Jesus, passing through death, led humanity to Life. In fact, he had reflected and commented on practically every passage of the gospel narratives about the Passion in one or more of his meditations.

It is therefore not surprising that those who worked on the editorial board of *Crónica*,<sup>[172]</sup> at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, thought of the possibility of developing some commentaries on the Way of the Cross, bringing together various paragraphs taken from the preaching of St. Josemaría about these scenes. When this suggestion reached the founder of Opus Dei, he welcomed the idea and asked that the texts be prepared for him to review and approve for publication. This was done, although the commentaries did not appear in *Crónica*, but in another similar magazine directed to the men of Opus Dei: *Obras*, published every two months, giving news about the apostolic initiatives carried out in different countries. The commentary on the first station of the Way of the Cross appeared in the February 1960 issue of *Obras*; the last, in the April 1962 issue.

Some time later, in the Roman College of the Holy Cross they thought of preparing a simple publication – some typewritten pages – that would include the commentaries on the fourteen stations, in such a way that it could be used as a devotional for the Way of the Cross. St. Josemaría had no objection to this, although he made it clear that no one should feel obliged to make use of this text. Nevertheless, soon after this was put into use, it became clear that the text in its current state was too long to be used for this purpose. Therefore, in 1964, following indications from St. Josemaría, an abbreviated version was developed. There is no indication that this abbreviated version had received his approval. In fact, the final revision of the text of *The Way of the Cross* had been left for later. The tasks that occupied St. Josemaría in the following years – including the revision of texts that we have discussed above – delayed the completion of this project, and it was left unfinished at the time of his death.

In 1977, Msgr. Álvaro del Portillo decided to take up the project where St. Josemaría left off, so that the book could be completed and published. He was not able to give full attention to this effort, so it was not ready to send to the printers until 1980. [173] As Msgr. del Portillo says in the prologue, *The Way of the Cross* is a work which is intended “to help people to pray and, with the grace of God, to grow in a spirit of reparation – of love-sorrow – and of gratitude to Our Lord, who has rescued us at the cost of his Blood.” For this reason, as he prepared the text for printing, besides introducing some changes that had been indicated by the founder, the successor of St. Josemaría also decided to include five “points of meditation” after the commentary on each station. These points were taken from the oral preaching and conversations of the founder of Opus Dei, which as Msgr. del Portillo continues in the prologue, “reflected his zeal to speak only about God and about nothing but God.” [174]

*The Way of the Cross* finally appeared in 1981. The first Spanish edition was printed on February 2 of that year. This was an especially elaborate edition, in which the different stations were accompanied by scenes painted in 1747 by Giandomenico Tiepolo for the *Via Crucis* in the Venetian Church of San Polo. Later Spanish editions, and translations into various other languages, include illustrations from a wide range of other painters. [175]

### **“Furrow” and “Forge”**

As we have already indicated, as soon as *The Way* was completed, St. Josemaría began to think about other books with points for meditation. As a first step, he chose two titles, titles that already give a fairly clear idea of the purposes he had in mind: *Furrow*, evoking the depth with which the divine call should mark the soul and lead one to a growth in the virtues, and *Forge*, which points to the way that God, through the ordinary events of daily life, tempers the spirit of the one who welcomes the inspirations of grace. [176]

We begin to hear of *Furrow* again in the beginning of the 1950s, in the author’s notes published in the seventh and eighth editions of *The Way*. [177] The first of these speaks of this book as possibly appearing soon, while the second indicates that its publication has for the moment been put on hold. It would be kept on hold for years, even though St. Josemaría still had this project in mind, and, in fact, in accordance with his usual method of work, continued gathering and putting order into notes towards this end.

At the moment of his death, the project was very much advanced, so much so that in the foreword, Álvaro del Portillo writes: “*Furrow* could really have been brought out many years ago.” [178] He continues, adding that the intense dedication of St. Josemaría to the government of Opus Dei and to other pastoral tasks “prevented [him] from making that last final revision of the manuscript with leisure.” Immediately after these words, he describes in detail the state of the text as St. Josemaría left it at the moment of his death: “*Furrow* had been finished, however, for some time, including the titles for the chapters into which it was divided. All that needed doing was to arrange the various entries in numerical order and a final style-edit.” [179]

In these paragraphs and in the foreword as a whole, Msgr. del Portillo aims to describe the work carried out by St. Josemaría, and to sketch out the fundamental lines of the message that the founder of Opus Dei transmits in *Furrow*. Indirectly, he also describes the task that he himself undertook when, in the middle of the 1980s, he decided to finish preparing the book for publication: to organize the points within the chapters and to go over the whole text to give it any necessary stylistic touching up, while entirely respecting the work and intention of St. Josemaría. The first edition of *Furrow* was printed in Madrid by Ediciones Rialp on October 2, 1986, and put on sale right away.<sup>[180]</sup>

The projects of *Furrow* and of *Forge* were conceived by St. Josemaría at the same time. There is evidence that a possible cover for *Forge* was prepared already in 1940; and in 1944, St. Josemaría commented that he was working on organizing the material that he wanted to include in that book.<sup>[181]</sup> Álvaro del Portillo, in the foreword to the first edition of the book, refers to the fact that “those of us who had the good fortune to be living by his side often heard him refer to this book, which had been taking shape gradually over the years.” And, referring to the state of the text at the time when St. Josemaría died, he continued: “Apart from putting the book into its finished order, he had intended to read over each point carefully, so as to put all his priestly love at the service of his readers. He was not interested in *embellishing* these points. What he wanted was to enter into the intimate world of each person and, while he waited for a suitable occasion to carry out this task...God Himself called him into His own intimacy.”<sup>[182]</sup>

Here, just as in the foreword to *Furrow*, we can see a reflection of the work carried out by Msgr. del Portillo: he was the one who proceeded to read and revise the points, to finalize the selection of material and put them into their definitive order.<sup>[183]</sup> Given to the printers a few months after Msgr. del Portillo wrote the foreword, in December of 1986, *Forge* was printed for the first time in Madrid, by Ediciones Rialp, on October 2, 1987.<sup>[184]</sup>

In his foreword, Msgr. del Portillo indicates that many of the 1055 points of *Forge* “are clearly autobiographical. They come from notes written by the founder of Opus Dei in some spiritual copybooks, not exactly a diary, which he kept in the 1930s.” To identify the exact source of the different points of *Furrow* and of *Forge*, a task that will have to be tackled when the critical editions of these works are prepared, will not be easy. The archival sources give some information about this, but it will be necessary to fill in the details by going through all the notes that are preserved of the preaching and the conversations of St. Josemaría. The words just cited of Msgr. del Portillo give us a clue regarding *Forge*: one preliminary search, already carried out, concludes that almost a third of the points of *Forge* are taken from the *Apuntes íntimos*.<sup>[185]</sup> This fact is important for the work of the historian, and is in itself significant: we cannot fail to note that the last published work of St. Josemaría brings us back to texts that have their origin at the very beginning of his foundational efforts.

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## ENDNOTES

[1] A more detailed explanation of these series can be found in the critical-historical edition of *Camino*, prepared by Pedro RODRIGUEZ, Madrid, Rialp, 2004, pp. XV-XVI (cited hereafter as *Camino*, crit. ed.)

[2] Ample information regarding the history and context of the various juridical documents can be found in Amadeo DE FUENMAYOR, Valentín GÓMEZ IGLESIAS, José Luis ILLANES, *The Canonical Path of Opus Dei*, Scepter Publishers, 1994.

[3] For more about this foundational moment, see José Luis Illanes, “*Dos de octubre de 1928: alcance y significado de una fecha*”, in *Scripta Theologica*, 3 ( 98 ), pp. 4-45 (reprinted in José Luis Illanes, *Existencia cristiana y mundo. Jalones para una reflexión teológica sobre el Opus Dei*, Pamplona, Eunsa, 2003, chap. 3) and Andrés Vázquez de Prada, *El Fundador del Opus Dei*, Madrid, Rialp, 1997-2003, vol. I, pp. 288ff.

[4] For this and other biographical details we will ordinarily refer to the biography of A. Vázquez de Prada mentioned in the previous footnote, though we will still make use of other sources as appropriate. Of course, readers may also consult other biographies: Salvador Bernal, *Mons. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer. Apuntes sobre la vida del Fundador del Opus Dei*, Madrid, Rialp, 1976; François Gondrand, *Au pas de Dieu. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, Fondateur de l'Opus Dei*, Paris, France-Empire, 1982; Peter Berglar, *Opus Dei. Leben und Werk des Gründers Josemaría Escrivá*, Salzburg, Otto Müller, 1983; Hugo de Azevedo, *Uma luz no mundo: vida do Servo de Deus Monsenhor Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, Fundador do Opus Dei*, Lisboa, Prumo-Rei dos Livros, 1988; Ana Sastre, *Tiempo de caminar. Semblanza de Monseñor Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, Madrid, Rialp, 1989; Pilar Urbano, *El hombre de Villa Tevere. Los años romanos de Josemaría Escrivá*, Barcelona, Plaza y Janés, 1995. One can also consult Federico M. Requena – Javier Sesé, *Fuentes para la historia del Opus Dei*, Barcelona, Ariel, 2002

[5] There were some writings earlier than those considered here, such as school assignments or things he wrote for amusement that have not survived, but which are referred to in some of the memoirs of his fellow seminarians. We might mention one of these: the essay written in honor of the auxiliary bishop of Saragossa and the president of the Priestly Seminary of San Carlos, Miguel de los Santos Díaz Gómara, built around the episcopal motto of the man being honored: *Obedientia tutior*; see A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., pp. 145-146. There is also still extant an article he published in 1927 in a magazine edited by an institute in Saragossa, the Instituto Amado, entitled “*La forma del matrimonio en la actual legislación española*,” in *Alfa-Beta*, 3 (March 1927), pp. 10-12. The text of the article, with ample commentary, can be found in Miguel Ángel ORTIZ, “*La primera publicación de Josemaría Escrivá*,” in Fernando DE ANDRÉS, *Figli di Dio nella Chiesa*, Rome, Edusc, 2004, pp. 63-91; volume V/2 of the Acts of the congress entitled *La grandezza della vita quotidiana*, organized on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of the Founder of Opus Dei and celebrated in Rome, January 8-11, 2002. Regarding the Instituto Amado, see A.

Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., Vol I., pp. 231-232, as well as the article by Constantino Áncel published in this volume of *Studia et Documenta*.

[6] This is the expression that he always used. Various references along these lines can be read in the biographical texts cited in footnote 3 above.

[7] The cause of canonization of St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer was introduced by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints on January 30, 1981, and culminated on May 17, 1992 with his beatification and on October 6, 2002 with his canonization. For more about this process, see *Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer. Itinerario de la causa de canonización* (Presentación de Jesús Urteaga), Madrid, Palabra, the commemorative volumes of Javier Echevarría – Flavio Capucci – Rosa María Echevarría et al., *Crónica de la beatificación de Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, Madrid, Rialp, 1992, and José Ramón Pérez Arangüena (ed.), *La canonización de Josemaría Escrivá*, Madrid, Rialp, 2003, as well as Flavio Capucci, *Josemaría Escrivá, santo: L'iter della causa di canonizzazione*, Milano, Ares, 2008.

[8] Msgr. Del Portillo also added marginal numbers to the text presented to the Congregation, by which points from the *Apuntes íntimos* are usually cited. The most thorough description published so far about the *Apuntes íntimos* is that written by Professor Pedro Rodríguez as part of the Introduction to the critical edition of *Camino*, pp. 18-26. We base our study on this critical edition, quoting it directly in many points and keeping it present throughout our presentation.

[9] The “Notebooks” are kept in the General Archive of the Prelature (AGP), serie A-3, leg. 88, carp. 1-8.

[10] From what is said, it seems clear that St. Josemaría, upon his return to Madrid at the end of the civil conflict, realized that the notebook he had had to leave in the capital of Spain still had various blank pages, and so he continued writing his notes there rather than beginning a new notebook.

[11] Although he did not say so explicitly, it is possible that on this point and on others having to do with the presentation of the volume containing the Notebooks, Msgr. del Portillo proceeded according to indications he received from St. Josemaría, when he gave him the task of adding the explanatory notes we will refer to later on (cf. footnote 16).

[12] St. Josemaría took refuge in the Honduran Legation in Madrid, together with some of those who followed him, during the period of religious persecution that accompanied the Spanish Civil War in that area. This time of refuge in the Honduran Legation began on March 14, 1937 and continued for some months; cf. A. VÁZQUEZ DE PRADA, op. cit. vol II, pp. 62ff, and the critical edition of *Camino*, pp. 52-60 and 136-139.

[13] A helpful summary of the preceding information can be found in the synoptic table presented by P. Rodríguez in the critical edition of *Camino*, p. 19.

[14] It is not possible to determine the exact date on which he began to transfer the collection of loose pages into the Notebooks. Nevertheless, it is clear when he finished this operation, since in Notebook II the author himself indicates it in an entry dated October 23, 1930 (*Apuntes íntimos*, n. 95, in Notebook II, p. 43v; cf. the critical edition of *Camino*, p.20.)

[15] For more information, we refer the reader once again to the critical edition of *Camino* prepared by P. Rodríguez.

[16] The current Prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr. Javier Echevarría, who lived with St. Josemaría during those years, remembers (though without recalling precise details) that the founder of Opus Dei picked up and reviewed these points at various moments before 1968 as well; he has a vivid

memory of the joy expressed by St. Josemaría at the beginning of this period when he saw the Notebooks again, since he had feared that they had been lost. Regarding the 1968 stay in Sant’Ambrogio Olona, see P. Urbano, op. cit., pp. 396-406, although the attention of the author is centered above all on the family atmosphere of those days. Msgr. Del Portillo fulfilled the task mentioned in the text when he prepared the edition of the *Apuntes íntimos* to which we referred earlier; with a view to the cause of canonization of St. Josemaría.

[17] This Introduction comprises pages 1-206 of the cited edition.

[18] *Apuntes íntimos*, n. 713; the entry is from May 10, 1932 (cited in the critical edition of *Camino*, p. 27). One should also note that he never let anyone read Notebook I, the contents of which were more intimate and which he later destroyed.

[19] There are copies of this version of *Consideraciones* in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 96, carp. 3, exp. 1.

[20] This can be found in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 96, carp. 3, exp. 2.

[21] See note 12.

[22] That which can be called the original definitive manuscript, that is, the final copy typed by the author and brought to the printer, is found in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 95, carp. 5, exp. 1. A description of this manuscript and of the following edition can be found in the critical edition of *Camino*, pp. 140-143 and 117-118.

[23] Regarding the multiple editions of *Camino*, the reader may refer to the listing, practically exhaustive up until the year 2002, published in José Mario Fernández Montes – Onésimo Díaz – Federico M. Requena, “*Bibliografía general de Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer: Obras de St. Josemaría*”, *Studia et Documenta* 1 (2007), pp. 441ff.

[24] AGP, serie A-3, leg. 102, carp. 3, exp. 1.

[25] Cf. A. VAZQUEZ DE PRADA, op.cit., Vol I, p. 409.

[26] *Apuntes íntimos*, n. 454, note 382 (A. VAZQUEZ DE PRADA, *ibid.*)

[27] This was kept by one of the young men whom St. Josemaría dealt with during those years, Rafael Roldán. It consists in the last two pages of a total of eight, containing the commentary on the three last glorious mysteries and the litanies, and the final paragraph with which St. Josemaría closed the book. Testimony of Rafael Roldán, Córdoba, June 14, 1977, AGP, serie A-5, leg. 1427, carp. 1, exp. 7.

[28] [Translator’s note: In this footnote, and throughout the rest of the article, the author follows the Spanish usage which generally does not distinguish between a “printing” and an “edition.” In Spain a new print run without any substantial changes in content, format or presentation is called a new edition rather than just a new printing.]An invoice has been preserved for a print run of 4000 copies (AGP, serie A-3, leg. 102, carp. 3, exp. 4). It is not possible to clarify the exact order of the first three editions. It is most probable that the one printed in Madrid in 1934 was the first edition; and that the 4000 copies printed in Valencia in 1939 were printed in two batches, that could thus be considered the second and third editions. Another possibility – less probable in our judgment – is that two printings were made of the edition produced in Madrid, in rapid succession and with the same format, which would imply that the Valencia edition was the third. In any case, the following edition, to which we will refer now, appeared as a fourth edition. From that moment on, there is no question about the sequence of the editions.

[29] The book includes a brief prologue written by the author on the occasion of his first visit to the sanctuary of Fatima in February of 1945, as well as some illustrations for each mystery, the work of the architect Luis Borobio. Copies of this first edition are found in AGP, serie A 3, leg. 102, carp. 1,

exp. 1. About the visit of St. Josemaría to Fatima, see Hugo de Azevedo, “*Primeiras viagens de S. Josemaría a Portugal*”, *Studia et Documenta* 1 (2007), pp. 24ff. The prologue written then was modified by the author in October 1968; this is the version that is included in later editions (AGP, serie A-3, leg. 102, carp. 4, exp. 1). A listing of the various editions of *Santo Rosario* up until 2002 can be found in J. M. Fernández Montes et al., cited above, pp. 428-431. Finally, we would point out that when John Paul II modified the structure of the rosary in his apostolic letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (October 16, 2002), completing it with five “mysteries of light”, the Prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr. Javier Echevarría, thought it opportune to add to the book some commentaries on these mysteries taken from writings of St. Josemaría referring to these moments in the life of Jesus. These commentaries were published for the first time in the 47th Spanish edition, which appeared in 2003, and in later editions. At first they were included as an appendix, but later they were moved to the place where they would naturally fall in the succession of the decades, with an initial note explaining their origin.

[30] *Apuntes íntimos*, nn. 1723 and 1735.

[31] About the history of his obtaining these academic degrees – specifically, the doctorate in Law and the doctorate in Theology – see the studies of P. Rodríguez and Francesc Castells, published in *Studia et Documenta* 2 (2008) 13-103 and 105-144, respectively.

[32] Original manuscripts of both texts written by St. Josemaría have been preserved (AGP, serie A-3, leg. 89, carp. 1, exp. 1 and 3).

[33] Regarding the situation in Spain of those years, one can read descriptions in the biographies of the Founder of Opus Dei already mentioned (cf. note 4) which, although cursory, are adequate for our present purposes.

[34] *Instrucción* cited above, n. 6; for the bibliographic and archival details, see the following note.

[35] The two *Instrucciones*, typed and copied, circulated widely among the members of Opus Dei. In later years they were printed, first in separate booklets and later, in 1967 and together with later *Instrucciones*, in two volumes, with notes written by Msgr. Álvaro del Portillo. The two *Instrucciones* of 1934 are in the first volume. The *Instrucción acerca del espíritu sobrenatural de la Obra de Dios* is divided into 49 numbers, and occupies pages 7-38; the *Instrucción sobre el modo de hacer el proselitismo* is divided into 101 numbers, on pages 43-83. These volumes are found in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 89, carp. 3, exp. 1 and leg. 90, carp. 6, exp. 1.

[36] Some historical information about the DYA Academy (officially, *Derecho y Arquitectura* [Law and Architecture]; in the mind of St. Josemaría, *Dios y Audacia* [God and Daring]), can be found in A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 508-511, 514-518, 521-528, 533-548.

[37] In 1932, during some days of spiritual retreat in the convent of the Carmelites in Segovia, where the mortal remains of St. John of the Cross lie, St. Josemaría saw that the apostolate of Opus Dei could be summed up in three great works: the first, directed to the formation of young people in awareness of the Christian vocation, and in this context, the call to Opus Dei; the second, directed to the care of the formation of people who joined Opus Dei and committed themselves to live celibacy so as to be fully available for the apostolic needs that might present themselves; the third, intended to spread the apostolate among people, single or married, of the most diverse social, cultural and professional conditions. During this same retreat, he placed these three tasks under the patronage of the Archangels St. Raphael, St. Michael, and St. Gabriel, respectively. About these days on retreat in Segovia, see A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit, vol. I, pp. 476-477.

[38] At first, he gave this document the title *Instrucción para los Formadores*; nevertheless, since the word “*formadores*” was not much to his liking, he changed the name, adopting the title

indicated in the text. The original text, consisting of 103 handwritten pages followed by two brief appendices, is found in has been AGP, serie A-3, leg. 89, carp. 2, exp. 1. In the 1967 edition it is found in the first volume and is divided into 306 numbers, occupying pages 87-217 (AGP, serie A-3, leg. 89, carp. 3, exp. 1).

[39] About the beginnings of these *Noticias* from DYA, see A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 520-521.

[40] St. Josemaría is the one who categorized these as Circular letters. They are very much related with the circumstances surrounding their composition, as we will see in what follows. They are therefore very different from the Letters spoken of in the 1933 annotations in the *Apuntes íntimos* (cf. note 30) and from those which we will discuss later on in this article. In contrast, they resemble, at least in some respects, the *Instrucciones* of 1934.

[41] The originals of the three Circular letters are preserved in AGP, serie A-3.4, leg. 254, carp. 5 and leg. 256, carp. 2.

[42] Regarding this point, as well as the preceding and following details, we refer the reader to the biography of A. Vázquez de Prada and the other biographical studies previously mentioned.

[43] Regarding St. Josemaría's doctoral studies in Law, see the article of P. Rodríguez mentioned above in note 31.

[44] This institute was called Academia Cicuéndez; about this academy, see the study of C. Áncel published in this volume of *Studia et Documenta*, already cited in relation to the Instituto Amado, in Saragossa.

[45] About the work in the *Patronato de Enfermos*, in addition to the information offered in various biographies, see the study of Julio González Simancas, "St. Josemaría entre los enfermos de Madrid (1927-1931)", en *Studia et Documenta* 2 (2008), pp. 147-203.

[46] So we learn in a letter written to Manuel Ayala on February 23, 1940, asking him to facilitate access to the bibliography and documentation of which they had spoken (AGP, serie A-3.4, leg. 256, carp. 4).

[47] These efforts can be seen in the annotations St. Josemaría made in his liturgical calendar (AGP, serie A-3, leg. 180, carps. 1 to 5), as well as in his correspondence with the Monastery of Las Huelgas (AGP, serie A-3.4, leg. 258, carp. 2), and in the remembrances of someone who accompanied him on one of these trips (Testimony of Amadeo de Fuenmayor, AGP, serie A-5, leg. 251, carp. 4, exp. 2).

[48] *La Abadesa de las Huelgas: estudio teológico-jurídico*, Madrid, Luz, 1944, 415 pp. Years later, in 1974, a second edition was carried out (reprinted in 1988), substantially the same as the first: the changes consisted in some details of composition, in the revision of the Latin and Spanish version of the documents cited, and in the preparation of an interesting prologue in which St. Josemaría explained some of his ideas about the investigation and its historical-juridical interpretation (Madrid, Rialp, 1974, 421 pp.). General documentation about this work, in its two editions, can be found in AGP, serie A-1, leg. 16, carp. 1, exp. 1; serie A-3, leg. 103 and leg. 104; serie A-5, leg. 251, carp. 4, exp. 2). Information about the reviews published about the first edition can be found in José Mario Fernández Montes – Onésimo Díaz Hernández – Federico M. Requena, "Bibliografía general de Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer: Obras sobre St. Josemaría (I)", *Studia et Documenta* 2 (2008), pp. 474ff.

[49] About these first moments in the priestly and foundational work of St. Josemaría, see A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 308-310, 444-454, 480-482, 488-494. See also, with specific

reference to his preaching, José Antonio Loarte, “*La predicación de St. Josemaría. Descripción de una fuente documental*”, *Studia et Documenta* Vol 1(2007), pp. 221-231, which we will have present throughout this section and in some of the following sections.

[50] *Apuntes íntimos*, n. 913; more information about this meeting can be found in A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 481-482.

[51] About this first Mass, which was celebrated on March 31, 1935, see A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 544-546.

[52] These form part of a collection of meditation outlines that was begun early in 1932 and continued until the beginning of the 1940s; this collection can be found in AGP, serie A-3, legs. 185 and 186. Some of the outlines explicitly mention the intended audience of the preaching; others develop their theme without any reference to who would be the audience, although in some cases it can be deduced from the content. One can get an idea of the broad work of formation carried out by St. Josemaría in the DYA Academy-Residence from the correspondence preserved by one of the residents of that time: cf. José Carlos Martín de la Hoz – Josemaría Revuelta Somalo, “*Un estudiante de la Residencia DYA. Cartas de Emiliano Amann a su familia (1935-1936)*”, *Studia et Documenta* 2 (2008), pp. 299-358.

[53] Cf. J. A. Loarte, op. cit., p. 225.

[54] Cf. note 12, with the bibliography cited there.

[55] These can be found in AGP, serie A-3, leg.107.

[56] In the 1960s, St. Josemaría began to review these meditations, making some notes on the text in his own hand, but soon interrupted this task when he realized that the texts were incomplete. (I owe this fact to the memories of the current Prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr. Javier Echevarría, expressed in personal conversations I had with him while this article was being prepared.) Years after the death of St. Josemaría, in 1997, a book was printed for the faithful of the Prelature which gathered the summaries that had been preserved. Keeping in mind point 294 of *The Way*, which itself was based on the situation they were living out in the Honduran Legation, the book was given the title *Crecer para adentro* [*Growing on the inside*]. (For more information, see the commentary on this point in the critical edition of *Camino*, pp. 475-477.) This book was very carefully prepared; although it is not meant to be a critical edition, it will constitute a great help when the time comes to undertake a critical edition. There is a copy in AGP, P12.

[57] Some historical details about the expansion in those years are covered in A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 394-409, 417-427, and 553-563. Among the centers that were established, we may mention only two of the most significant: one in Madrid, in a building on the corner of Diego de León and Lagasca Streets, in which St. Josemaría resided, and the first center of women of Opus Dei, also located in Madrid, on Jorge Manrique Street.

[58] These are included in the collection mentioned in note 52.

[59] A description, with an indication of the work of organization that was being carried out, can be found in J. A. Loarte, cit., pp. 225-226 and 230.

[60] For an overview of his pastoral activity in these places, see A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 199-208 and 217-223, for what refers to Saragossa, and pp. 274-286, for what refers to Madrid.

[61] In 1931 St. Josemaría began to work as the chaplain for the *Patronato de Santa Isabel*; later on, in 1934, he was named rector. The church of Santa Isabel, open to the public, allowed him also to attend to people who were not dependents of the *Patronato*. Regarding the relations between St. Josemaría and the *Patronato de Santa Isabel*, see A. Vázquez de Prada op. cit., vol. I, pp. 374-

379 and 528-533; cf. also the article by Beatriz Comella published in this same volume III of *Studia et Documenta* (2009)

[62] Nevertheless, this fact did not impede him from preaching in some cases, with the opportune permission. Specifically, we have record that on June 13, 1930, he gave a talk for a large group of Catholic workers in what was called the Bishop's Chapel, which shared a wall with the church of San Andrés in Madrid. About this talk, see A. Vázquez de Prada, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 329.

[63] Cf. note 52.

[64] We refer the reader, regarding what we have just said and what follows, to the details presented by P. Rodríguez, *Camino*, critical edition, pp. 133-134. Some information about his relation to St. Pedro Poveda, although fragmentary, can be found in A. Vázquez de Prada, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 504-505, 540, 588.

[65] A. Vázquez de Prada, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 722-729, where, in a long appendix, there is a list of 67 retreats, recollections and other analogous events that were preached between August 1938 and September 1946, in the most varied Spanish dioceses.

[66] For example, there are the outlines prepared by St. Josemaría for the retreat preached in Vitoria in August 1938 (to religious sisters, in the episcopal palace) and in Vergara, in September of the same year (to priests, in the seminary building), in both cases at the request of the apostolic administrator bishop, Msgr. Xavier Lauzurica. St. Josemaría began to prepare the outlines for this preaching during some days he spent in Ávila and completed them during the retreat in Vergara; later he used them again, retouching them on more than one occasion (cf. P. Rodríguez, *Camino*, critical edition, p. 135, note 21).

[67] These remembrances are preserved in AGP, serie A-5, leg. 210, carp. 2, exp. 1 and serie A-1, leg. 328, carp. 2, exp. 39.

[68] This was the case with the Augustinian Félix Carmona, who published the notes he personally took from the retreat St. Josemaría preached to the Augustinian community in El Escorial in 1944: Félix Carmona Moreno, *Apuntes de ejercicios espirituales con St. Josemaría Escrivá*, El Escorial, 2003.

[69] Regarding those plans, as well as what we speak of in what follows, see the critical edition of *Camino*, pp. 64-66.

[70] These names appear in a handwritten note of St. Josemaría, written at the time when he was studying the possible cover of the first edition of *Camino* (cf. *Camino*, critical edition, pp. 114-115, note 74). The book about *Celibato, Matrimonio y Pureza* is spoken of in *Camino*, n. 120. Of the one entitled *Comentarios*, the handwritten note mentioned offers no further information; from other references from the time one can suppose that St. Josemaría may have been thinking of a series of commentaries on texts of the Gospel. (Perhaps it is appropriate to relate this project to the list of 112 "Frequently Meditated Words from the New Testament – June 1933", published with an introduction and notes by Francisco Varo in *Studia et Documenta* 1 (2007), pp. 259-275.) Besides the books mentioned in this note, we ought to mention one other: a liturgical devotional, to which St. Josemaría alludes on various occasions. This was almost finished in 1940, but at a particular moment, the author decided against publishing it (see details about this matter in the critical edition of *Camino*, pp. 65-66, 78, 84-86, 90). Part of the materials for this project are found in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 177 carp. 5. There is no document in this folder that explains why St. Josemaría abandoned the project; the explanation offered by Pedro Rodríguez (*Camino*, critical edition, p. 84, note 93) – the desire to avoid anything that could give the impression that Opus Dei had its own

liturgy – has been confirmed by the testimony of Msgr. Javier Echevarría, who remembers having heard St. Josemaría say this on various occasions.

[71] Cf. note 30.

[72] Regarding these texts, their historical-juridical context and their content, see A. de Fuenmayor et al., op. cit., pp. 89ff.

[73] This method has also been described, in much greater detail, in the sections that Pedro Rodríguez dedicates to this theme in the critical-historical edition of *Camino*, already cited many times above.

[74] About juridical matters, we once again refer the reader to A. de Fuenmayor et al., op. cit., pp. 115ff. For a historical perspective, see A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 594-611, 626-638.

[75] In this country, and specifically in Rome, there had been two faithful of Opus Dei since the academic year 1942-1943 (Salvador Canals y José Orlandis), even though the wartime situation made the apostolic expansion difficult, and even impossible. José Orlandis has given an account of his years living there in two books of remembrances: *Memorias de Roma en guerra* (1942-1945), Madrid, Rialp, 1992, and *Mis recuerdos. Primeros tiempos del Opus Dei en Roma*, Madrid, Rialp, 1995.

[76] More information can be found in the various biographies, especially in A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 179-184 and 313-359.

[77] The first of these decrees of approval is dated February 24, 1947, a few days after February 2 of that year, the date on which Pius XII promulgated the Apostolic Constitution *Provida Mater Ecclesiae* creating the figure of Secular Institutes, which Opus Dei came under. The second of these pontifical decrees, which – as is affirmed in the text – has the form of definitive approval, is dated June 16, 1950. Regarding these juridical-canonical steps, see A. de Fuenmayor et al., op. cit., pp. 145ff, 195ff. and 235ff.

[78] This document is found in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 176, carp. 2, exp. 10.

[79] This edition of the *Catecismo* is found in in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 318, carp. 1.

[80] *Catecismo*, n. 53, edition of 1947, p. 32. This text is already found, with the same wording, in n. 45 of a previous version of the *Catecismo* in the form of a typewritten booklet, dating from 1945 or 1946 (p. 17 of this booklet), which is also found in AGP.

[81] This note, which was included in that seventh edition, is reproduced in the critical edition of *Camino*, p. 1059.

[82] About this point, see A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 195-211.

[83] This advice is spoken of by P. Urbano, op. cit., pp. 127-128, and A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. III, p. 165, drawing from the remembrances of Msgr. Álvaro del Portillo, and specifically his declarations in the cause of beatification of St. Josemaría (*Positio super vita et virtutibus, Summarium*, n. 782. In that declaration Msgr. del Portillo does not specify the date on which the narrated incident took place, but from the context it can be inferred that it took place in the years 1951-1952).

[84] Regarding this motto, see the critical edition of *Camino*, commentary to nn. 647, 648, 848 and the introduction to chapter 41.

[85] In 1948 he had erected the Roman College of the Holy Cross as a center of formation for men of Opus Dei from various countries, and in 1953 he erected the Roman College of Holy Mary, for women.

[86] The “Editorial note” to the eighth Spanish edition of *Camino*, dated May 28, 1952, gives some evidence of this situation when it says, not without a certain note of regret, that “the author has not had the time needed to make the final touches to *Furrow*, the upcoming appearance of which was announced in the previous note.” (The text of this note is reproduced in the critical edition of *Camino*, p. 1066.)

[87] In fact, the Second Vatican Council mentions this document among the immediate Magisterial antecedents to its solemn proclamation of the universal call to holiness: Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, n. 40, note (4).

[88] During those same years, the founder of Opus Dei undertook to write a second, briefer piece about Secular Institutes: the contribution sent to the Congress about “states of perfection” celebrated in Rome in 1950; this text can be found in the *Acta et Documenta Congressus generalis de Statibus perfectionis*, Roma, Pia Società San Paolo, (1950, pp. 272-276). Regarding the 1948 conference presentation, we point out that shortly after it was given, it was published in the *Boletín de la Asociación Católica Nacional de Propagandistas*, 427 (1949), pp. 1-5. It was later printed in the form of a booklet. Until the middle of the 1950s this booklet was given, along with other documentation, to bishops from whom permission was being requested to begin the apostolate of Opus Dei in their diocese. In the mid 1950s St. Josemaría realized that it was necessary to distance himself from the confusion that had been created regarding the concept of the Secular Institute and that the moment had arrived to take new steps in the juridical process. He began to express in a more public manner that Opus Dei was not in fact a Secular Institute, even if it was so in law. As a logical consequence, this booklet was no longer distributed.

[89] A more detailed analysis of this conference is given in A. de Fuenmayor et al., op. cit., pp. 217-219. In this work one can also find documentation regarding the events alluded to in the second part of the previous note.

[90] Regarding this point of the juridical-canonical history of Opus Dei, see A. de Fuenmayor et al., op. cit., pp. 197-202 and 252-257; see also A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 153-163.

[91] The original manuscript of the definitive text finished in 1950 can be found in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 90, carp. 5, exp. 1; it is not divided into numbers, which were added later. The pages or paragraphs written in 1935 have not survived. In the 1967 edition of the *Instrucciones* (cf. note 35), it is on pp. 195-384 of Volume II, divided into 175 numbers.

[92] Some of these tapes (24 in total) have survived: cf. J. A. Loarte, cit., p. 228.

[93] This is a building situated on the corner of Bruno Buozzi and Villa Sacchetti streets, named Villa Tevere. Although the work of remodeling began right away, it took quite some time. About the development of the construction, and about this period of the life of St. Josemaría in general, see A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 23ff., 100ff., 118ff., 169ff., 211ff. and 273-276.

[94] We refer the reader once again to J. A. Loarte, op. cit., p. 226-227.

[95] To the great number of such compilations of get-togethers, sometimes brief and sometimes more extensive, we have to add a large collection of notes taken by individuals. One final detail will allow us to complete our overview of the preservation of the preaching of St. Josemaría. The expansion of the apostolic activities, with the subsequent geographic dispersion of the members of Opus Dei, made the founder feel the need for a channel of communication to fill out what was shared in correspondence crossing in the mail. The outcome was the publication of a newsletter (*Hoja informativa*), a simple monthly publication started in 1949, photocopied with news about the apostolic work all over the world, sent from the central offices of Opus Dei to the different centers

of the Work. In the beginning pages, in a section called “*Del Padre*” (“From the Father”), some brief, pithy lines would be included from the founder. The last issues of the *Hoja informativa* were published in 1953, to be substituted by new publications, still simple, but of somewhat higher quality, using new equipment they had available. Thus, two new magazines were launched in 1954: *Crónica*, for the men, and *Noticias*, for the women (AGP, P01 and P02, respectively). Both publications kept the custom begun in the *Hojas informativas*: beginning with a section entitled “*Del Padre*”. The texts printed in this section, along with others which were included in other articles in the magazines with greater or lesser frequency, were sometimes written directly for this purpose, but ordinarily they were taken from the oral preaching of St. Josemaría, who would review them carefully before they were published. We therefore have explicit approval of the author for written versions of part of his preaching: a small part in relation to the whole, but still significant.

[96] The portrait of St. Josemaría was the tenth in this series, which included also such figures as Indira Gandhi, Giorgio La Pira, Konrad Adenauer and Léopold Sédar Senghor.

[97] Regarding the beginnings and the later development of the University, one may consult Onésimo Díaz – Federico M. Requena (eds.), *Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer y los inicios de la Universidad de Navarra (1952-1960)*, Pamplona, Eunsa, 2002, and José Antonio Vidal-Cuadras (dir.), *50 años de la Universidad de Navarra (1952-2002)*, Pamplona, Eunsa, 2002.

[98] The events in Saragossa and Pamplona – and especially in Pamplona – had a great echo in the Spanish press, both regional and national. Among other reasons, this was because the establishment of the *Estudio General de Navarra* as a university implied a rupture in the monopoly that the Spanish government had held until then over university instruction. Gathering together the various articles, in 1961 the university published a volume of more than 300 pages. (Among other places, this volume can be consulted in the *Fondo Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, Biblioteca de la Universidad de Navarra, FBJE 151.736.) Regarding the academic acts in Pamplona, there is of course ample additional information to be found in the archives of the University of Navarre.

[99] Just as in 1960, the University of Navarre published a volume collecting almost everything that appeared in the press during those days. (Among other places, this volume can be consulted in FBJE 151.669.) Various regional and national daily newspapers offered their own syntheses of the animated dialogue with the audience that filled the Gayarre theater, to which we refer in the text: *El Alcázar*, Madrid, December 1, 1964; *Arriba España*, Pamplona, December 1, 1964; *La Gaceta del Norte*, Bilbao, December 1, 1964; *La Vanguardia*, Barcelona, December 1, 1964; *Diario de León*, December 2, 1960.

[100] Cf. A. de Fuenmayor et al., op. cit., pp. 365ff.

[101] The only exception is one habit that began, or at least was consolidated, during his years in Rome, and of which the author of these pages can give testimony from the second half of the 1950s: that of incorporating into his work some paragraphs and ideas taken from his reading of the newspaper. Ordinarily, Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer celebrated Mass first thing in the morning, at the same time as Álvaro del Portillo did. Usually they would have breakfast together afterwards, and take advantage of this time to read the newspaper. While reading, St. Josemaría would often mark paragraphs or articles in which there were phrases, stories, graphic expressions, or ways of saying things that seemed effective or attractive. I began to work in one of the offices annexed to the General Council of Opus Dei in the 1950s, and St. Josemaría requested that one of us should pass by the living room at the end of each afternoon and look through the paper. Almost every day we would find one or two articles marked with some very characteristic strokes. Our assignment consisted in cutting these passages out and passing them to him the following morning. More than

once he commented – showing his great concern not to interfere in any way with the intellectual freedom of others – that he had marked them not because he was in agreement with what was said there, but because he had liked some phrase or expression and thought that at some point it could be useful for his preaching.

[102] For a detailed description of this way of working, to which we already alluded above, see the critical edition of *Camino*, pp. 61-76.

[103] Letter of St. Josemaría to Florencio Sánchez Bella, November 1, 1966, AGP, serie A.3-4, leg. 285, carp. 5. This letter, together with other details of the life of St. Josemaría in these years, is discussed in A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 461ff.

[104] Cf. note 101. The testimony that I wrote when the time came, together with other testimonies which make reference to this and other aspects of the work of St. Josemaría as an author, are preserved in AGP, serie A-5, leg. 251, carp. 4, exps. 1 and 3.

[105] Herranz, Julián *Nei dintorni di Gerico. Ricordi degli anni con san Josemaría e con Giovanni Paolo II*. Milan, Ares, 2005, pp. 115-117.

[106] Cf. Comments made above and, for a more general explanation, A. de Fuenmayor et al., op. cit., pp. 365ff.

[107] More information on these events can be found in A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 9 ff., 380 ff. and 509 ff. I am also grateful to Msgr. Javier Echevarría for sharing information and other details about the preservation of St. Josemaría's papers in the personal conversations with him to which I have made reference above.

[108] It is not possible at this point to be precise about whether St. Josemaría took this course of action on his own initiative or at the suggestion of the families mentioned, but, in both cases, the documents were carefully protected.

[109] This move to Rome was decided upon in the General Congress of Opus Dei held in Einsiedeln, Switzerland during the summer of 1956; for information on this Congress, cf. A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 256-260.

[110] This area was two floors high with compartments especially prepared for the conservation of documents. Later on, the archive was moved to another location and this area was renovated to accommodate a series of rooms.

[111] The oratory-library, which was completed in 1954, is a room approximately 10'x23', at the end of which there is an altar dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The sides of the room are lined with shelves and cabinets. In one of the cabinets to the left of the entrance there is a storage unit with 12 drawers, each divided in half. It was here that St. Josemaría had the personal papers mentioned above stored so that they could be organized according to their dates and topics.

[112] Msgr. Javier Echevarría recalls that, during a get-together with members of the General Council of Opus Dei in 1958, St. Josemaría read some passages from the *Instruction for Directors*, a document we will discuss below. The sheets of paper on which the *Instruction* was written were clearly from a much earlier time, and the first page of each—as was usual in many texts written by St. Josemaría—carried the invocation “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and of Holy Mary”. The depth of faith and sense of the future with which St. Josemaría expressed himself on those sheets of paper from as long ago as the 1930s impressed itself deeply on Msgr. Echevarría's mind, as he himself testifies. The same was true of the others who were also present, as was corroborated by a later commentary of one of the other persons in attendance.

[113] References to this workshop (which took place January 21 to March 12, 1963) and, specifically, to the task St. Josemaría entrusted to the delegates, are made at various points in the diary of the General Council from that period (AGP, D 430-IV), although these entries don't go into much detail. Although some of the delegates who participated in the task are now deceased, it has been possible to reconstruct a picture of what was accomplished based on the memories of those still living (their testimonies are preserved in AGP, serie A-5, leg. 251, carp. 4, exp. 8) as well as on the remembrances of some of those persons who were members of the General Council at that time, and particularly on the recollections of Msgr. Javier Echevarría.

[114] Cf. note 30.

[115] Cf. note 80.

[116] Although St. Josemaría simultaneously carried out the task of completing the *Instructions* and preparing the *Letters*, it seems better to separate the discussions of these two different types of texts. We will start with the *Letters* and leave consideration of the *Instructions* for the next section of this chapter. Some of the considerations we will make about the *Letters* will also be applicable to the *Instructions*, as will be evident when we deal with them below.

[117] Prof. Pedro Rodríguez remembers that in January of 1967, when he went to Rome to begin a trip related to his studies through various countries of Europe, St. Josemaría remarked that he had finished “the series of *Letters*” (after having completed the *Instructions*). He then gave Rodríguez printer's proof copies of two *Letters*—those dated August 15, 1964 and October 10, 1965, respectively—asking the young man to read them slowly and attentively. This is just one example among many—including personal memories of my own—of St. Josemaría's use of the phrase “series of *Letters*” or analogous expressions to refer to this group of documents.

[118] It is important to note, however, that, even for those *Letters* not later translated into Latin, St. Josemaría wanted to make use of a Latin version of a letter's opening phrase so that, should it in some case be opportune, the letters could be cited by their Latin *incipit*.

[119] St. Josemaría's decision to use the earlier date for those letters was influenced, as already pointed out above, by his desire to underline the divine initiative in all that had to do with the origin and spirit of the Work, as well as to follow the motto that he meditated on and cited frequently: “to do and disappear, that only Jesus shine forth”. At a particular moment he thought about (and discussed with Álvaro del Portillo and Javier Echevarría) the possibility of putting two dates on those *Letters* whose content originated early on, as he had done in 1950 with the *Instruction on the Work of St. Gabriel* and again in the 1960s with the *Letter* of December 29, 1947. He soon discarded that idea, however, because, although the final editing took place later, the substance or skeletal structure of those documents dates from the 1930s and 1940s. He considered that putting two dates on those letters would, in effect, create the false impression that the substance of their content had developed in his mind as a result of his personal reflection during the years in which he finished preparing them for publication rather than—as was actually the case—as the fruit of the foundational charism he had received.

[120] In order to accomplish all this work, while always maintaining the full authority corresponding to him as founder, St. Josemaría counted on the collaboration of the two people who were constantly with him—Álvaro del Portillo and Javier Echevarría, as well as, in some cases or at particular moments, the help of some other person. One additional point to keep in mind: with the *Letters*, as with other texts, St. Josemaría followed the criterion of destroying any outlines, drafts and notes once he had created the final version of a document. This means that, as far as the oldest *Letters* are concerned, it is impossible to reconstruct the various stages of their development. In other words, it cannot be determined which paragraphs or phrases came from

the earliest texts and which St. Josemaría altered as he completed the final version. Nevertheless, when the moment comes to prepare a critical edition, one thing that could be done is to compare the texts of these *Letters* with that of the first *Instructions*, *The Way* and *Holy Rosary*, as well as with the outlines of meditations, days of recollections and circles that date from the same era, since the nucleus of what is said in the *Letters* is also found in these documents. Recourse can also be had to the testimonies of those who knew and dealt with St. Josemaría during the 1930s and early 1940s. In regard to the final version and the preservation of these letters in the archive, we refer the reader to what will be said below about the revision of the entire collection by St. Josemaría in 1969 as well as to the archival references in note 129.

[121] In 1967 and the years following, St. Josemaría composed other *Letters* that are not part of the series we are now considering. We will discuss these other letters below.

[122] Documentation about these *Letters* can be found in AGP in the files to which we will direct the reader at the end of this section (note 129). Though we have already referred to this documentation and will continue to do so throughout the rest of this section, using the archival reference to best advantage requires having at hand both the information we have already provided as well as information to be provided below.

[123] The dates of these *Letters* are: March 24, 1930; March 24, 1931; January 9, 1932; July 16, 1933; October 2, 1939; March 11, 1940; October 24, 1942; May 31, 1943; February 2, 1945; May 6, 1945; April 30, 1946; October 15, 1948; February 14, 1950; January 9, 1951; August 15, 1953; March 28, 1955; August 8, 1956; September 29, 1957; January 9, 1959; June 16, 1960; October 2, 1963; February 14, 1964; August 15, 1964; July 29, 1965; October 24, 1965. Though it is not properly speaking a letter, we could add to this list a talk given by St. Josemaría on June 9, 1965 which was first published in *Noticias* (cf. note 95) and later as a pamphlet, about the women of Opus Dei who exercise the profession of those who, at one time, were referred to as dedicated to domestic service and later as household employees (AGP, P02, VI-1965, pp. 5ff).

[124] *Letters* of February 14, 1944; December 29, 1947/February 14, 1966; December 8, 1949; October 7, 1950; September 14, 1951; December 24, 1951; December 12, 1952; March 19, 1954; May 31, 1954; October 2, 1958; January 25, 1961; and May 25, 1962. These *Letters* formed the hermeneutic background for the book *The Canonical Path of Opus Dei*, in which they are abundantly cited.

[125] The existence of these *Letters* was soon made more widely known through their being cited in publications on theology, spirituality and canon law written by faithful of Opus Dei. In 1965, two lengthy theological essays were published in which the *Letters* were also frequently cited: “*La santificación del trabajo, tema de nuestro tiempo*”, by José Luis Illanes (published in Italian in the journal *Studi cattolici*, 57 (1965), pp. 33-59, and in the original Spanish in the collection “*Cuadernos Palabra*”, Madrid, Palabra, 1966; this work, later expanded and completed has been published in a number of editions and translations), and “*«Camino» y la espiritualidad del Opus Dei*”, by Pedro Rodríguez (published in the review *Teología espiritual*, 9 [1965], pp. 213-245, as well as later included in the book *Vocación, trabajo, contemplación*, Pamplona, Eunsa, 1986). Still later than these is the essay by Justo Mullor, *La nueva cristianidad. Apuntes para una teología de nuestro tiempo*, Madrid, BAC, 1966, which also makes frequent reference to the *Letters*, as other still later publications have done.

[126] The one exception is the *Letter October 29, 1947/February 14, 1966*, the text of which is typed, double spaced, on 21.5 x 34.2 cm foolscap.

[127] Apart from the exception just noted.

[128] St. Josemaría used the method of writing his corrections on a printed copy of the text in the revision of an earlier letter as well, the *Letter* of December 8, 1949.

[129] Both the typewritten and the printed copies of *Letters* discussed above, with the corrections introduced into them, are preserved in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 91 (*Letter 24-III-1930 to Letter 24-X-1942*); leg. 92 (*Letter 31-V-1943 to Letter 30-IV-1946 and Letter 15-X-1948*); leg. 93 (*Letter 29-X-1947/14-II-1966 and Letter 24-XII-1951*); leg. 94 (*Letter 8-XII-1949 to Letter 8-VIII-1956*); leg. 95 (*Letter 29-IX-1957 to Letter 29-VII-1965*); leg. 96 (*Letter 24-X-1965*).

[130] Cf. note 78.

[131] The materials on which St. Josemaría based his work were still extant at the end of the 1950s – as Msgr. Echevarría testifies in his remembrances, already cited above (cf. note 112) – but later the founder had them burned. Only the final versión has survived. It consists of 69 small typewritten sheets of paper, on which St. Josemaría handwrote some corrections. The text is divided into 103 numbered sections (AGP, serie A-3, leg. 90, carp. 6, exp. 2). It is included in the first volume of the edition of the *Instructions* printed in 1967 (cf. note 35), in which it occupies pages 221 to 352.

[132] An envelope has been preserved on which is written “*Instruccion S. Mig.*”, containing a series of notes, some handwritten and others typed (AGP, serie A-3, leg. 90, carp. 6, exp. 3). The final version consists of 94 typed pages, with some corrections noted in St. Josemaría’s handwriting. It is divided into 132 numbered sections (AGP, serie A-3, leg. 90, carp. 6, exp. 4). It is included in the second volume of the 1967 edition of the *Instructions* (cf. note 35), on pages 7-190.

[133] Ample documentation regarding this interview and the others we will refer to can be found in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 105; serie A-5, leg. 251, carp. 4, expts. 1 y 3, and serie K-6, leg. 852.

[134] In this task, going from one version to the next, he wanted those who served as his secretaries to follow the method of cutting and pasting mentioned earlier. This was certainly a timesaving method, although the result is that only the final version is found in the archive, without its precedents. The only exception to this is the interview in *Le Figaro*, of which one of the earliest versions has been preserved, with abundant handwritten corrections.

[135] Regarding this assembly see AGP, serie A-2, leg. 58, carp. 1, exp. 2; one can also find ample documentation in the archive of the University of Navarra.

[136] Documentation of this can be found in AGP, serie K-6, leg. 852.

[137] Documentation can be found in AGP, as cited in earlier notes.

[138] A list of editions published through 2002 can be found in J. M. Fernández Montes et al., “*Bibliografía general de Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer: Obras de san Josemaría*”, op. cit., pp. 441-443.

[139] Documentation of this can be found in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 105, carp. 9, and serie K-6, leg. 851. In fact, in the time between the publication of *Conversations* and the decision mentioned in the text, he granted only one interview, for what can be qualified as family reasons: it was granted to the weekly publication *El cruzado aragonés*, which was published in the city where he was born, Barbastro. This interview appeared on May 3, 1969. After November of 1969, he made only one exception, also for personal motives: the friendship that united him to a well-known Spanish journalist, Julián Cortés Cavanillas, the Rome correspondent of the Madrid daily *ABC*. This was published on March 24, 1971. Documentation regarding both these interviews can be found in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 105, carps. 7 and 9.

[140] This had been published in the December issue (pp. 229-242), with a title different from that which it had in Spanish: “*Le matérialisme chrétien*” [“Christian materialism”], an expression taken from one of the passages of the homily.

[141] One can find documentation regarding this text and the collection of homilies that ended up together in *Christ is Passing By* in AGP, serie K-6, legs. 852, 853 and 857 and Serie A-5, leg. 251, carp. 4 exps. 1 and 4. More detailed information, together with the opportune historical and theological notes, can be found in the critical edition of *Es Cristo que pasa*, currently in preparation by Antonio Aranda, professor of Theology in the University of Navarra.

[142] In the preceding paragraphs and in what follows, we use the words “meditations” and “homilies” interchangeably, switching between these terms as needed to reflect the work and intention of St. Josemaría. In many cases, the majority, the point of departure was not a homily in the strict sense of this word – that is, a text preached in the heart of the Mass after the reading of the Gospel – but rather a meditation preached before the Eucharistic celebration or at other moments, but always with a clear reference to the Gospel. Thus, it is fitting to use both words.

[143] Information about the exact dates and places of the publication of each of these homilies can be found in J. M. Fernández Montes et al., “*Bibliografía general de Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer: Obras de san Josemaría*”, op. cit., pp. 460ff.

[144] The consequence in this case, as with the interviews in *Conversations*, is that the earlier versions are not preserved. Nevertheless in some cases St. Josemaría, on re-reading the texts published in magazines or in booklets, sometimes added handwritten corrections of detail, and these texts are found in the archive.

[145] Documentation of this can be found in AGP, serie K-6, legs. 853 and 857.

[146] The title *Christ is Passing By*, chosen by St. Josemaría himself, reflects one of the fundamental affirmations of Christianity: Jesus Christ, living and resurrected, makes himself present in history through the Church and through Christians. Since its first edition, this book has included a foreword written by Álvaro del Portillo.

[147] For information about the editions and translations that followed until 2002, see J. M. Fernández Montes et al., “*Bibliografía general de Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer: Obras de san Josemaría*”, op. cit., pp. 443-445.

[148] The eight homilies published during St. Josemaría’s lifetime are the following (cited by title in the order of the date of their publication): Humility; Human Virtues; Life of Faith; So that All Might be Saved; Time: a Divine Treasure: Life of prayer; Towards Holiness; Mother of God and Our Mother. For the specific date and place of publication of each homily, see J. M. Fernández Montes et al., “*Bibliografía general de Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer: Obras de san Josemaría*”, op. cit., pp. 480-492. About these eight homilies, and in general, about *Friends of God*, see documentation in AGP, serie K-6, legs. 855 and 856, and serie A-5, leg. 251, carp. 4, exps. 1 and 4.

[149] We owe to Msgr. del Portillo, both the decision to continue publishing homilies until the work already begun by St. Josemaría had been completed, and the determination of the order in which the homilies would be placed and the choice of their titles, based in some cases on the express indications of the founder of Opus Dei, and in other cases, on the deep familiarity that Msgr. del Portillo had with the spirit, language, and way of focusing topics proper to St. Josemaría.

[150] For information about successive editions and translations, through the year 2002, see J. M. Fernández Montes et al., “*Bibliografía general de Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer: Obras de san Josemaría*”, op. cit., pp. 443-445.

[151] This was titled “*Huellas de Aragón en la Iglesia Universal*” and published in *Universidad: Revista de cultura y vida universitaria*, 37 (1960), pp. 733-739. Documentation can be found in AGP, serie A-2, leg. 30, carp. 4 and serie A-3, leg. 106, carp. 5, exp. 4.

[152] All are included in the book *Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer y la Universidad*, Pamplona, Eunsa, 1993. There is abundant documentation in the General Archive of the University of Navarra about the events granting doctoral degrees *honoris causa* in Pamplona. There is also documentation in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 106, carps. 5, 8, 11.

[153] The first was published in the book mentioned in the previous note. Regarding the second, documentation can be found in AGP, serie A-2, leg. 32 and serie A-3, leg. 106, carp. 5, exp. 10. The third appeared in the daily publication, *Nueva España* (Huesca), on May 27, 1975; documentation can be found in AGP, serie A-2, leg. 31, carp. 6 and serie A-3, leg. 106, carp. 5, exp. 13.

[154] A substantial representation of the episcopate, gathered in Rome during those days for the last segment of the Second Vatican Council, participated in this event. On November 22-23, 1965, *L'Osservatore Romano* published an extensive article about it, including the speeches of Paul VI and of St. Josemaría. The Spanish version of St. Josemaría's presentation is included in the book *Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer y la Universidad*, cited above in note 152. More documentation can be found in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 106, carp. 5, exp. 9.

[155] Documentation can be found in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 106, carp. 5, exp. 15.

[156] The first of these appeared in *El Noticiero*, Zaragoza (Spain), on October 11, 1970. The second was printed in *Libro de Aragón*, Zaragoza, Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad de Zaragoza y Rioja, 1976. Although this book was published after the death of St. Josemaría, the text had been submitted earlier. Documentation can be found in AGP, serie A-3, leg. 106, carp. 5, exp. 12 y 14.

[157] For more information about this whole theme, see the article by J. A. Loarte cited in earlier notes.

[158] These numbers do not include other spoken words of St. Josemaría for which there are notes or compilations, just as there were from earlier years.

[159] Regarding this point, see the article cited above by J. A. Loarte. See note 95 about *Crónica* and *Noticias*.

[160] *En diálogo con el Señor* was published in 1995 with a brief prologue written by the prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr. Javier Echevarría. There is a copy in AGP, P09.

[161] This Year of Faith was convoked by means of the apostolic exhortation *Petrum et Paulum*, AAS 59 (1967), pp. 193ff. With the occasion of the celebration of the nineteenth centenary of the martyrdom of the Apostles, the opening date of this Year of Faith was set for June 29, 1967, to be closed on June 30 of the following year. In the apostolic exhortation, Paul VI invited the whole Christian people, and particularly those entrusted with pastoral tasks, not only to strengthen their own faith, but to encourage a broad work of catechesis. At first, it did not seem that the Roman Pontiff was thinking of proclaiming the text of a new profession of faith or Creed, but later on he decided to do this, and the Year of Faith closed on June 30, 1968 with a solemn liturgical ceremony in which Paul VI proclaimed the profession of faith known as the “Credo of the People of God,” AAS 60 (1968), pp. 433ff.

[162] In AGP, serie A-3, leg. 95, carp. 6, there is a typed text with abundant corrections in St. Josemaría's handwriting. Although it is not expressly indicated, one can see that there were earlier drafts, and that this was the version that was to be printed; nevertheless, St. Josemaría himself

says in a marginal note dated March 1967 (without indication of the exact day) that there still might be a need to touch it up when the time came to review the printers' proofs.

[163] In the text printed with the indicated format (16×12 cm.), the Letter of March 1973 is 28 pages long; that of June 1973, 51 pages; and that of February 1974, 48 pages.

[164] AGP, serie A-3, leg. 96, carp. 2, contains some printers' proof copies of the 1971 Letter to priests, with handwritten corrections from St. Josemaría. Only the definitive printed text of the two Letters from 1973 and the one from 1974 have been preserved. (AGP, serie A-3, leg. 96, carp. 1)

[165] The homily entitled "The supernatural aim of the Church" is dated May 26, 1972, and published in the collection called "*Folletos de Mundo Cristiano*" in 1974. "Loyalty to the Church" is dated June 4, 1972, and "A priest forever" is dated April 13, 1973; both were published in the same collection, also in 1974. After St. Josemaría had died, in 1986, Ediciones Palabra (Madrid) gathered these homilies into a book, to which they gave the title *Amar a la Iglesia [In love with the Church]*. This book also included two articles by Msgr. Álvaro del Portillo, intended to outline some aspects of the figure and message of St. Josemaría. Regarding the various editions and translations of "*Amar a la Iglesia*" up until 2002, see J. M. Fernández Montes et al., "*Bibliografía general de Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer: Obras de san Josemaría*", op. cit., pp. 450ff

[166] All of the published biographies include descriptions of these trips, to a greater or lesser extent. We refer the reader, as we have in earlier notes, to the most extensive of these: that of A. Vázquez de Prada, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 585-588, 646-660, 694-731 y 747-752. For an overview, see also F. M. Requena – J. Sesé, op. cit., pp. 146-149.

[167] Specifically, there are 70 recordings of the catechesis in Mexico in 1970; 281 of the catechesis in Spain and Portugal in 1972; 389 of the catechesis in the Americas in 1974 (some of which correspond to gatherings in Spain, when he was on his way to and from America); and 87 of the catechesis in the Americas in 1975 (some of which also are from when he was passing through Spain on his way back).

[168] Specifically, 59 from the catechesis in Spain and Portugal in 1972; 45 from the catechesis in the Americas in 1974, and 11 from the catechesis in the Americas in 1975. There are also a much smaller number of films taking in other moments – only three in total.

[169] In the year 2002, with the occasion of the congress organized to celebrate the centenary of the birth of St. Josemaría and his later canonization, a series of documentaries about some of these get-togethers was published, showing various segments. Specifically, these documentaries covered six encounters: in Spain on November 26, 1972; in Brazil on June 1, 1974; in Argentina on June 26, 1974; in Chile on July 5, 1974; in Peru on July 13, 1974, and in Venezuela on February 11, 1975. The preparation of these documentaries was entrusted to the production company called Betafilms (Madrid); the choice of segments was made with attention to both the content and the length, in such a way that each film would be no longer than thirty minutes long.

[170] In the process of beatification, which reached its culmination in 1992, there were presented six thousand letters which had been found up until that point. In later years, many more were found, so many that the number of letters written by St. Josemaría is in excess of ten thousand.

[171] *The Way*, n. 556. The commentary on this point in the critical edition of *Camino*, pp. 686-687, offers some details about the presence of this devotion of the *Via Crucis* since the beginning of the priestly life of St. Josemaría.

[172] About this magazine, see note 95.

[173] In this task, he counted on the help of one of the members of the editorial board of *Crónica* and *Obras*.

[174] The prologue is dated September 14, 1980. Documentation can be found regarding the first publication of the text in 1960 and 1962, as well as the final revision by Msgr. Álvaro del Portillo, in AGP, serie A-5, leg. 251, carp. 4, exps. 1 and 6, and serie D-2-2, leg. 4952.

[175] For information about successive editions and translations until the year 2002, see J. M. Fernández Montes et al., “*Bibliografía general de Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer: Obras de san Josemaría*”, op. cit., pp. 447-450.

[176] Documentation about *Furrow* and *Forge* can be found in AGP, D-2.2, leg. 4951 and serie A-5, leg. 251, carp. 4, exps. 1 and 5.

[177] See notes 81 y 86.

[178] The presentation is dated June 26, 1986.

[179] Even though Msgr. Álvaro del Portillo does not explicitly mention it in the presentation, we note that St. Josemaría, many years previously, had left ready the “Author’s Preface” and decided that the book should be ended with a point number 1000, written as a humorous commentary directed to those who had tried to find a cabalistic meaning in the 999 points of *The Way*, rather than understanding this number for what it was: a way of paying homage to the Blessed Trinity – three times three, thrice repeated. (Regarding the number of points in *The Way*, see the critical edition of *Camino*, pp. 70 and ff.)

[180] For information about successive editions and translations until the year 2002, see J. M. Fernández Montes et al., “*Bibliografía general de Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer: Obras de san Josemaría*”, op. cit., pp. 450-453.

[181] More information can be found in the critical edition of *Camino*, p. 15, note 14, y p.114, note 74.

[182] This presentation is dated December 26, 1986.

[183] Although Msgr. del Portillo does not give these details in the presentation, it could be opportune to point out once again that, according to the documentation we have, the “Author’s Preface” and the titles of the chapters come from St. Josemaría.

[184] For information about successive editions and translations until the year 2002, see J. M. Fernández Montes et al., “*Bibliografía general de Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer: Obras de san Josemaría*”, op. cit., pp. 453-455.

[185] I owe this calculation to Prof. Pedro Rodríguez, the author of the search mentioned.